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**TANG BUDDHIST SCULPTURE OF
SICHUAN:
UNKNOWN AND FORGOTTEN**

by

Angela Falco Howard

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INTRODUCTION

Studies of Tang Buddhist sculpture are relatively few and for the most part geographically and chronologically limited, since they focus exclusively on China's northern provinces and usually consider mid-eighth century as the start of the decline. A comprehensive study on this subject is still to be written. Seiichi Mizuno, to single out a prominent art historian, wrote on the Tang Buddhist sculpture of Shandong, Henan, Shanxi, and Shaanxi, from the rise of the Tang dynasty (618) to approximately 750.¹ He devoted only a few remarks to the art executed during the second half of the dynasty. Up to the present, Mizuno's article typifies the best in Tang scholarship as well as its confines.

The category of Tang Buddhist sculpture set up by scholars in the past is fundamentally restricted and biased, since it rests solely on the art executed north of the Yellow River and neglects that originating in the area along or south of the Yangtze River, the art of China's southern provinces.

The situation was justified in the past by the fact that prior to the founding of the People's Republic, non-Chinese scholars knew only the northern evidence. The dealers who had supplied the art collectors in the West at the beginning of this century had access chiefly to the body of sculpture from Shandong, Henan, Shanxi, Shaanxi. Western scholars basing their research on these collections, studied, therefore, exclusively the artistic achievements of northern China. They established, however, a Tang category valid for the entire country which we still accept unquestioningly.

The self-imposed temporal limitation of mid-eighth century in the investigation of Tang sculpture is rooted in the scholars' assumption that where political power is centered there also necessarily resides the peak of cultural achievements. This approach clearly discriminates against the possible contributions of the peripheral centers. If one upholds that political power and cultural greatness are inseparably intertwined, the inevitable result is to underestimate the value of the art produced after the peak of dynastic stability and power. Because of this belief, the historians concluded that the Anlushan [1] revolt (755) irreparably weakened the dynasty and its patronage of religious art, and that the anti-Buddhist measures of 845, furthermore, inflicted a final and fatal blow to the organization of Buddhism and its devotional art.

This approach has historical validity for northern China where Tang art did in fact decline, especially during the ninth century. In other parts of China, however, particularly in the southwest, Buddhist art, in that period of time, was experiencing a profuse blossoming and reaching new heights of creativity. During the second half of the Tang (755-907), the production of religious art diminished in the northern provinces, but increased in the southwestern

provinces of Yunnan and especially in Sichuan. Furthermore, the Buddhist art of these areas was marked by its own style and iconography.

In this study, I present the evidence which I gathered during nine months of investigation and research of several Tang Buddhist sites in the province of Sichuan.² This completely new body of evidence has never before been brought to our attention. Although by no means exhaustive, the present survey offers the opportunity to widen the existing category of Tang Buddhist art so as to make it well-balanced and as comprehensive as possible. The Sichuan material not only enlarges our knowledge, but enables us to study the stylistic progression of the art without interruption until the end of the dynasty. Furthermore, its growth continued after the Tang during the short-lived Kingdom of Shu [2] (907-65) and blossomed as well during the Song (960-1279). Since Buddhist art was already available in this province as early as during Eastern Han in the second century AD, and flourished afterwards during the Northern and Southern Dynasties period, I stress the fact that Sichuan is the only place in China where Buddhist art can be studied in uninterrupted sequence from the second to the thirteenth century.

Very few art historians have visited Sichuan in this century or before to carry out investigation. In 1914 and 1917, the Frenchman Victor Ségalen, accompanied by Gilbert de Voisins and Jean Lartigue, spent some months in Sichuan. The French team's chief aim was to survey Han funerary monuments as witnessed by their subsequent publications.³ During their stay in Sichuan, they also reached some Buddhist and Daoist sites, Guangyüan [3], Bazhong [4], Mianyang [5], Leshan [6], Jiajiang [7]. Yet the material they gathered is very modest in comparison to what was and still is available in the same locations. Ségalen did not attempt at all a systematic study of Sichuan Buddhist monuments because he did not consider Buddhist art as a truly indigenous expression of China. He actually disdained Buddhist sculpture.⁴ Tokiwa and Sekino, the Japanese team, also travelled in northern Sichuan. Their photographic record of the Buddhist sites they visited is as scanty as that of their French colleagues.⁵

Perhaps the fact that Buddhist locations are difficult to reach, a situation which has not drastically changed even today, limited the amount of data collected by both the French and Japanese teams. With the exception of Dazu [8], where the sites of Baodingshan [9] and Beishan [10] have become the showcase of Buddhist art in the province, and of Leshan and Jiajiang, only recently opened to foreign visitors, all the other numerous locations which have Buddhist sculpture remain off limits. The sites are situated in backward, rural areas, not yet serviced by public transportation and without any accommodation for foreign guests. The cliff sculpture is usually incorporated in peasants' hamlets. It overlooks distant vistas of terraced rice-paddies, carefully tended fields and luscious bamboo thickets. The sculpture is left exposed to the natural elements. Only in a few cases is it given the proper

protection. The risk that the sculpture will incur further damage inflicted by nature or by man is a real one.

This copious and beautiful legacy of Tang art is by no means an astonishing surprise. As already remarked, in Sichuan, the sculptural tradition is one of the oldest. During the Later Han, the province distinguished itself for its achievements in funerary art, three-dimensional objects, brick and stone reliefs. It is now beyond doubt that Sichuan was one of the provinces in which the earliest proto-Buddhist images were executed, such as, for instance, those found at Leshan and Pengshan [11].⁶ In Sichuan, no evidence has yet been found of Buddhist art executed in the period after the Han but before the Northern and Southern Dynasties. But the Buddhist art fashioned during the latter period is copious. At the time of China's division between the northern and southern dynasties, Sichuan was exposed to the creative achievements of the two sides and benefited from both. In fact, Sichuan was under the administration of the Southern Liang dynasty (502-57). In 552, however, part of it was conquered by Western Wei and in 560 the army of the Northern Zhou (which had inherited the territory of Western Wei) pushed south into Sichuan and occupied Chengdu [12]. The northern influence of the Wei can be detected in the sculpture of Guangyüan, in northern Sichuan (see *infra*). The influence of the Southern Liang is evident in the sixth century sculpture unearthed at the Wan Fo Temple [13], in Chengdu.⁷ Furthermore, the monks who travelled from India to the southern capital of Nanjing, upon leaving the Hexi [14] corridor in Gansu, entered Sichuan at Guangyüan and proceeded south to the Yangtze River. Along the Yangtze, they travelled all the way to the east coast of China. The journey, of course, was also undertaken in the opposite direction.⁸ Sichuan, thus, was not only exposed to the artistic influence of the two areas, the North and the South, but to the northern and southern schools of Buddhism, as well.

During the Tang, Sichuan was of particular importance to the dynasty on account of its strategic position. It lay as a defensive bastion against the two kingdoms of Tibet and Nanzhao [15], which were emerging threats to the western and southern borders of China. Between 711 and 719, to contain them both, Sichuan was set up as a military commandery, ruled by a military governor seated in Yizhou [16] (present Chengdu). The province consisted of the territories called Jiannan West [17], Jiannan East [18] and of part of Shannan West [19] (the area immediately south of Shaanxi, part of present day Gansu). Similar military commanderies were established throughout the empire, to contain the menacing growth of different barbarian tribes.⁹

Besides the strategic reasons, Sichuan was very important to the dynasty because of its natural wealth. It was one of the most prosperous areas of China. Blessed by a great abundance of water, crossed by many major tributaries of the Yangtze River, all flowing in a southerly direction (fig 1), the province was and still is, a rich, self-supporting area whose population was rising during the

Tang.¹⁰ Furthermore, the rivers placed in communication all the centers set up along their shores. It is interesting that most of the Buddhist sites are situated along the riverbanks, repeating a pattern which applied earlier to Han mortuary tombs. The communication by water – the great artery of the Yangtze links Chongqing [20] to the east coast – and the road joining Changan to Chengdu, fostered trade. Sichuan, therefore, was not only rich farmland, but a thriving commercial area, open to influences from all directions. Communications and transactions made the province a very dynamic ground and made of the Sichuanese extrovert, sociable people.

Sichuan, in comparison with the other provinces, also enjoyed fairly stable and peaceful conditions. After the Anlushan revolt in mid-eighth century, a series of uprisings and revolts took place during the ninth century in north and northeast China. They spread and became endemic all over China. In Sichuan, however, social discontent could always be contained, because the provincial administrators were basically loyal to the dynasty and never threatened secession. The governor Wei Gao [21], who was in power from 784 to 805, acted rather freely in his sphere of jurisdiction, but always remained within the limits of loyalty to the central government, to which he regularly sent huge sums of money. His successor, Liu Pi [22], laid claim to the territory forming Jiannan West and East, but within months, in 806, was completely defeated. Even as late as the end of the ninth century, under the rule of Emperor Xi Zong [23] (reigned 873-88), when the northern and eastern coastal provinces of China under Huang Chao [24] were irretrievably lost to the dynasty, Sichuan was still firmly controlled by forces loyal to Changan. In fact, the Chien Neng [25] revolt (882), against the corrupt rule of the governor Chen Jingxuan [26] (appointed through the intrigues of his brother, the chief eunuch Tian Lingze [27]) was not pursuing the same goals nor had it the same incentives as the Huangzhao's revolt.¹¹

The natural wealth of Sichuan and, on the whole, its peaceful and stable political climate which lasted from 750 until the end of the dynasty, were excellent reasons for the court to seek refuge in Chengdu twice. Emperor Xuan Zong [28] fled Changan and remained in exile in Chengdu with part of his court from July 756 until October 757. Following the same pattern, in 881, Emperor Xi Zong took shelter in Chengdu and returned to Changan in 885. The presence of the Emperors and of their retinue may have contributed to the flourishing of Sichuan cultural life. Their support of Buddhism may also have spurred the making of Buddhist art. It may be more accurate to state that the imperial presence in Sichuan may have reinforced a tradition which was already firmly established prior to the arrival of the royalty. Monks, painters, and artisans accompanying the court found in Sichuan a soil receptive to both their teaching and talents.¹²

Prior to the flights of the two Emperors, some members of the imperial house had resided in Shu, and others had special ties with it. For instance,

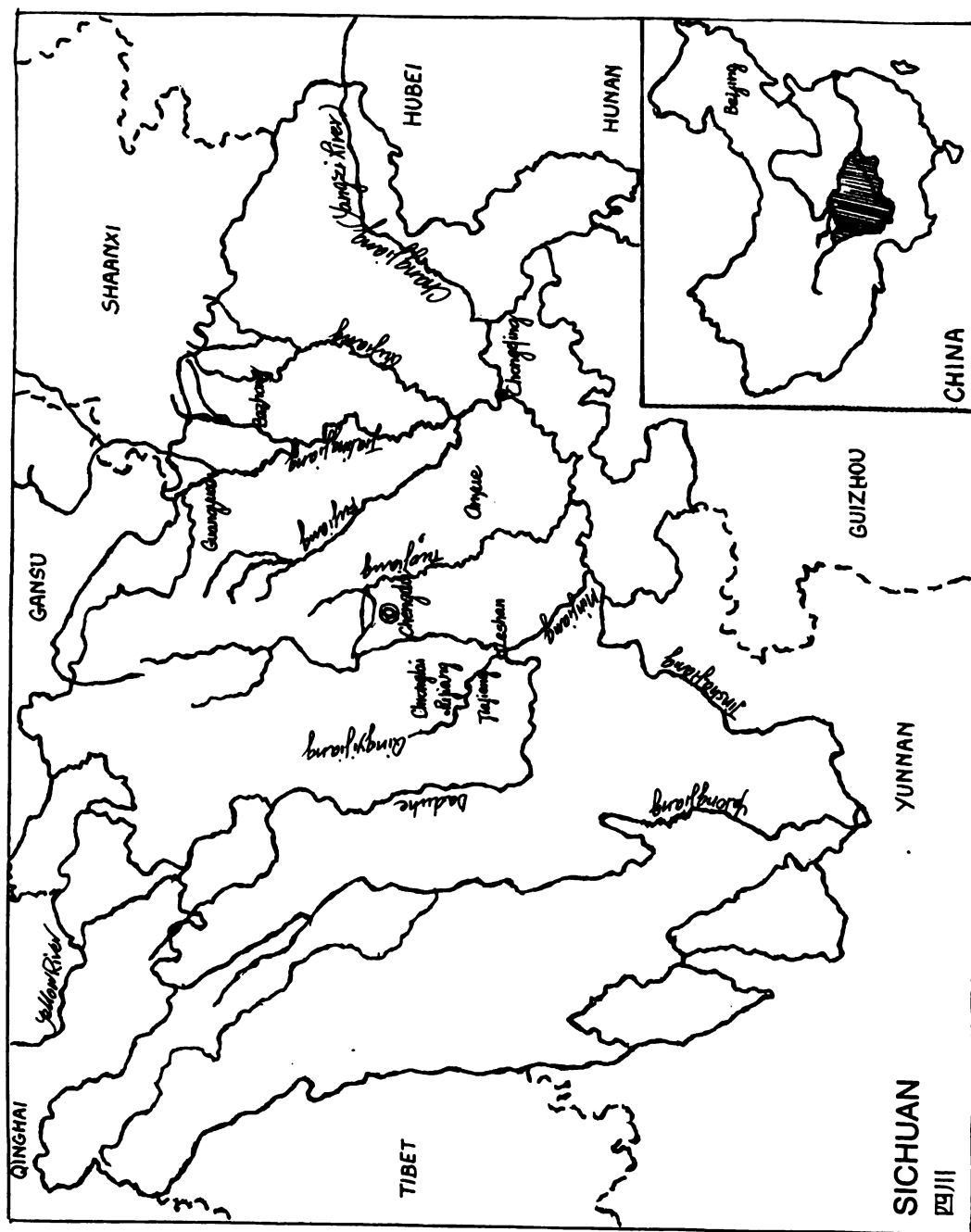


Figure 1 MAP OF SICHUAN

Empress Wuzetian [29] was born in Guangyüan while her father was assigned there as Governor General. Li Xian [30] (654-84), the son of Emperor Gao Zong [31] and Wuzetian, was exiled by his mother to Bazhong under the accusation of having plotted to seize the throne. There he met an untimely and tragic death.¹³

In summary, because Sichuan was naturally rich, politically stable, and loyal to the dynasty, and because of the direct route linking Changan to Yizhou, through Guangyüan (see *infra*), it is quite clear why it played such a special role for the court. The presence of the Emperors and of the metropolitan nobility strengthened the cultural and artistic climate, and favored the development of Buddhism and its arts, especially in the second half of the dynasty when other areas of the country were constant prey to unrest. It would be wrong, however, to assume that the royal presence was the determinant cause for the artistic and religious blossoming of Shu. This region, as already mentioned, had its own well-established tradition to rely on, a tradition which had taken roots much earlier than the Tang.

There is an additional aspect of the Buddhist art of Sichuan which has been ignored. The province was a bastion against the Kingdoms of Tibet and Nanzhao and had continuous exchanges, both military and cultural, with them. Both kingdoms were Buddhist, both created their religious art following a style and an iconography differing from those of the capital. Sichuan Buddhist art may have incorporated aspects of style and iconography derived from the Tibetan and Yunnanese formulas.

The sites of Buddhist sculpture introduced here are those to which I was granted access. There are others which I hope to be able to investigate in the future. According to the latest survey, in the entire province of Sichuan, forty-nine counties have cliff sculpture.¹⁴ Furthermore, in each county, several sites are available, bringing, thus, to sixty-three the number of locations with Tang remains. I have grouped the sites according to their northern, central, and southern location in the province. The sculpture of central Dazu County will be presented in a separate study. All the cliffs in which the sculpture was carved are red sandstone. In most instances, the images have suffered from weathering; in some, from human destruction, especially during the Cultural Revolution. Frequently they have been repainted to stop the process of erosion. In contrast to the large cave sites in northern China (Yungang, Longmen) Sichuan cliff sculpture occupies niches and small chambers rather than large grottos. Of course there are a few exceptions.

After Liberation, in 1949, Chinese scholars started, on a modest scale, the publication of the sites in Sichuan in archaeological journals. The Cultural Revolution put a halt to it for over a decade. Since 1980 there has been a renewed effort to preserve the sites, to survey and to publish them. Whenever available, I have used these reports in the present survey.

NORTHERN SICHUAN GUANGYÜAN COUNTY

In Tang time, Guangyüan was called Lizhou [32]. It was considered the great gate to Shu, the passage way from the northern provinces of Shaanxi and Gansu to southern Sichuan. The Jin Niu Road [33] of Qin [34] time entered Shu and continued through present day Mianyang to Chengdu.¹⁵ Thus, Lizhou had great strategic importance. In the county, at present, there are three Buddhist sites: the Huangzesi [35], or Temple of Imperial Largesse, the Chien Fo Yan [36], or Thousand Buddhas Cliff, and the Guanyin Yan [37], or Guanyin Cliff. Each one of the three is situated alongside the Jialing River [38], one of the Yangtze tributaries.

Huangzesi, The Temple of Imperial Largesse

It is located one kilometer from the center of town, on the western bank of the river. Six rock chambers of varying sizes and forty-one niches are still extant. Most of them are now enclosed in buildings, or are, at least, protected by a roof (Pl. 1). Those which are carved high on the cliff are reachable by stairs. The Huangzesi lost part of its sculpture and its original setting in 1934 when the nearby road and the railroad were built. The majority of the sculpture, on the basis of its style, appears to have been carved in the Early Tang, in the seventh century. Some sculpture may have been executed even earlier, perhaps during the Sui dynasty, but there is no inscription to back this opinion. In niche 31 there were once two inscriptions, one dated the second year of Jenguan [39] (628), the other the second year of Baoli [40] (826), but they are no longer decipherable. The 826 inscription may have been added later since it does not tally with the style of the images.

Kuangyüan and the Huangzesi are historically connected with the dynastic house. There is no doubt that Empress Wuzetian was born in Guangyüan County about 627.¹⁶ At that time her father, Wu Shihuo [41], had been assigned to Lizhou as Governor General. The temple which once existed at the site was also linked to the Empress, although it is not clear whether she had sponsored its construction or not. A stone image of her, furthermore, was kept in the ancestral hall which was part of the temple compound. At present there is a pavilion, of recent date, dedicated to Wuzetian where a stone likeness of her is kept. She is portrayed as a nun. By all means, this is not the original work and has no artistic merit. The fact that the Empress was portrayed as a nun refers to that time of her life when, after Tai Zong's [42] death, she may have retreated to a nunnery, prior to her return to court, as a favorite of Gao Zong, around 649.

In 1954, a stele (92 centimeters high) was found in front of the ancestral pavilion, of the Huangzesi. It is inscribed on both sides. In the front, the title reads "New Temple Records [regarding] the Tang Empress Zetian Née Wu and the Huangzesi in the Lizhou Commandery". It is dated Later Shu, the twenty-second year of Guangzhen [43], corresponding to 959.¹⁷ In the front of the stele, the record states that the Empress was unmistakably a native of this place. During the Jenguang era, her father Wu Shihuo was Governor General of the *zhou* where the future Empress was born. It mentions that an effigy of Wuzetian was kept in the temple. But it adds that the reason for placing her image in the shrine was unknown even to the men of Later Shu, no documentation being available. The image was considered endowed of supernatural powers. On the back of the stele are recorded the expenses incurred to refurbish the temple. The name of the Empress is included among the benefactors. Thus, although this evidence is not absolutely conclusive, it seems to indicate that the temple predates the Empress.¹⁸ What is relevant is the special tie which linked Guangyüan to the Tang court through the Empress. It may explain the presence in the county of high quality and great quantity of sculpture.

At the Huangzesi, the size of niches and grottos varies from monumental to small. The sculpture placed in them displays also some difference in style which ranges from the end of the sixth to the seventh century. It is regrettable that on account of the severe restrictions on photographing, one cannot provide a more comprehensive picture of the site. What follows is a description of the material available.

The grotto with central stupa-pillar, number 7, is a small, squarish room (2.55 meters wide and 2.61 meters deep). The central pillar (0.75 meters high) is connected with the ceiling (Pl. 2). On the rear, and lateral walls there are three large niches; each contains a pentad. On either side of the large niches, there are two smaller ones, each containing a triad (Pl. 3). The remaining surface of the walls is entirely covered with the Thousand Buddhas pattern. By comparing the photo taken by Ségalen which shows the whole view of the grotto, with my own photographic evidence, it is apparent that in 1917, the grotto had been repainted and decorative patterns had been added to the ceiling and niches. Today, the painted addition have been removed. Some of the sculpture has also been crudely repaired, as shown by the Buddha's arms. The Buddhas' draperies which fall over the thrones may have also been recarved.

The triple-tiered central pillar has suffered more damage than any other element in the grotto. The sculptures placed in the pillar's shallow niches display a retardataire style of mid-sixth century. They have elongated, thin bodies hidden by garments ending in a cascade of drapes. On the other hand, the sculptures placed in the wall niches display an Early Tang style (Pl. 4). The Buddhas are very similar to each other except for variations in the sitting

posture and in the hand gestures. The Bodhisattvas are uniformly portrayed with one arm hanging down, the other raised to shoulder's level (Pl. 5). The rounded and graceful bodies of the Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, and monks still show a lingering stiffness and a lack of dynamism. These traits are also found in the Early Tang sculpture of Longmen, in the Hui Jian Grotto [44], dated 673.

The shape and decoration of the three large niches are particularly successful. Certain devices introduce us to the tendency of the Sichuanese carver to abound in decorative details which create exquisite effects. Such is the case of the two slender dragons framing the niche. Their tails intertwine in a series of loops on the niche's top, while their heads are turned back at the niche's mid-level to behold the group inside (Pls. 3,4). The pattern is based on a Northern Wei model, but shows a Sichuan interpretation. The *apsarases* on the niche's reveals, and the nine small seated Buddhas surrounding the head of each Buddha in the three niches are also purely Sichuanese inventions of this province. On the subject of niche decoration there will be further opportunities to discuss many and more elaborate examples.

Niche 10 is the largest and best preserved at the Huangzeshi. Its sculpture is sheltered by the roof of an open pavilion built all around the carved cliff. This rectangular, monumental niche is rather shallow (3.6 meters deep) in comparison to its width (6 meters) and height (7 meters). Its ceiling is slightly vaulted. The group consists of fifteen images, once framed on each side by two *dharani* pillars now gone. The main image is a standing Buddha, perhaps Śākyamuni, almost as tall as the niche, portrayed with the right hand in the *abhaya mudrā* (Fear not gesture) and the left holding a jewel (Pl. 6). He is flanked by the monks Ānanda fingering a rosary (Pl. 7) and Kāśyapa carrying an incense burner. Two richly attired and jewelled Bodhisattvas are carved next to the disciples. Two Vajrapāṇi, now very eroded, framed the group at each side (Pl. 8). A very small donor in the attitude of prayer is shown kneeling at Ānanda's feet. These images were all executed in high relief and arranged to form a semi-circle; their size decreases as one proceeds from the center to the sides. The remaining background images were, instead, executed in low relief. They represent the Demi-Gods of the Eight Classes, referred to in Chinese as the Tian Long Babu [45] (Pl.9). They are a Deva, Nāga, Yakṣa, Gandharva, Asura, Garuda, Kinnara, and Mahoraga. They are included in the group as defenders of the Buddha.¹⁹ These supernatural beings are very popular in the sculpture of Sichuan, but are completely absent in the Tang sculpture, not painting, of northern China. They are a peculiarity of Sichuan Buddhist art. In this particular group, six of the eight are still visible. At our right, the spirit with a helmet framing his face in a heart shape is perhaps a Deva (?); the one with the lion headdress could be a Gandharva. There is no doubt that the spirit with three faces (serene, laughing, and grimacing) and with six arms (two holding the sun and moon) is the Asura. At our left, only the Nāga is

recognizable as the one wearing a dragon on his headdress. The eight demi-gods appear in the sculpture of northern Sichuan during Sui, as attested by a dated grotto in Bazhong (see *infra*). Their presence could be even earlier, but the evidence has not yet been found.

This iconography had its first artistic interpretation during the fifth century, at the southern dynasty court of Liu Song [46] (420-78), as attested by an entry in the *Chu San Zang Jiji* [47]. The interpretation of the eight demi-gods at the Nanjing court was likely transmitted to Sichuan. Since they are also portrayed in the Japanese art of the Nara period, for instance at the Kōfukuji [48], the question arises whether the coastal regions or Sichuan transmitted the iconography to Japan.²⁰

In my opinion, the monumental sculpture of Niche 10 belongs to early Tang, to the first half of the seventh century. Their thick-set, solid bodies, their impassive, stern, rather somber expressions, the heavy jewelry worn by the Bodhisattvas (three-dimensional pendants on the chest and rosettes between the legs) (Pls. 6, 9) are strongly reminiscent of similar Northern Zhou sculpture. One ought to remember that those traits were originally Sichuanese and were incorporated in the Northern Zhou vocabulary most likely when the Northern Zhou militarily invaded Sichuan and occupied Chengdu (560). The splendid rinceau pattern decorating Buddha's halo is also related to the vegetal patterns used in the sculpture of Xiangtangshan [49]. Equally stunning and imaginative are the halos of the Bodhisattvas. They have a peach shape and are embellished by seven Buddhas of different sizes each contained in a flaming *cintāmaṇi* as if it were a niche. This device is exclusively Sichuanese. The hand-gestures of the images are similar to those performed by icons of the late sixth-early seventh century in northern China.

The cluster of niches numbered 11 to 20, of modest sizes, were carved in the wall adjacent to the monumental Niche 10 (viewer's right). They are superimposed and make three tiers (Pl. 10). In them, the images form groups of varying numbers. There are three, five, seven, and also a few individual images. These sculptures are very simple and unadorned, displaying rather elongated proportions (Pl. 11). They clearly embody Sui stylistic traits.

The niches numbered 21 to 33 have been enclosed in a pavilion ordinarily kept locked and used as a tea-room. Unfortunately, no photographing of the sculpture inside was allowed. The size of the niches varies and so does the number of images within the niches. Some niches contain as many as seven, others five, or three, or one, almost life-size images. Most of them have suffered severe damage and have been recently repainted. I single out the fairly large grotto number 27 for its former excellence of execution, a soft and unencumbered early Tang modeling. The shape and arrangement of this grotto were like those of number 7 previously discussed. However, in grotto 27, the central stupa-pillar is no longer extant. There are only the three large niches in

the surrounding walls. Niche number 28 also was the product of great skill. It displays five images standing under a luscious tree.

I consider last Niche number 4 illustrated in an early Chinese report.²¹ Both its iconography and style are very important. The niche is rectangular and rather high (2 meters high, 1.34 meters wide, 0.85 meter deep); its ceiling is slightly vaulted. The carver skillfully succeeded in placing thirteen images, about 1.50 meter tall, inside it. The iconography is the same as that portrayed in the monumental 10, it only lacks the two Vajrapāni. The carving techniques applied are also similar since the foreground images are carved in high relief, those in the background in low relief. In Niche 4, however, the style is earlier. The graceful, slender, elongated bodies, unadorned and covered by thin cloth suggest a Sui date of execution. The eight demi-god protectors benignly look down on the five images. It is a well-knit composition gathered under the thick canopy of the jewelled trees. Comparable arrangements occur at the Thousand Buddhas Cliff, another site in Guangyüan, where similar groups are definitely of later execution. Niche 4 may have been the precursor of the monumental 10. For the moment a more thorough discussion is impossible.

Chien Fo Yan, The Thousand Buddhas Cliff

This site lies about 15 kilometers from the center of town on the western bank of the Jialing River, opposite to the Huangzesi. In size and quality of achievements, it can be compared to Longmen. To this day, The Thousand Buddhas Cliff is still unknown and no publication of its sculpture is available. Although the niches and grottos have been cleared and repaired and the access to the site is supervised by personnel of the Cultural Relics Bureau, as of April 1986, when I visited the site, the enumeration of the reliefs had not begun. The names given to the most important caves refer either to their iconography or decor, for example, Nirvāṇa Cave or Lotus Cave.

The niches and grottos occupy the entire surface of the cliff for a length of 417 meters and a height of forty meters. On the cliff, hardly any space has been left empty (Pl. 12). Many niches, however, are no longer occupied by their sculptures, which have been destroyed. The niches, of various sizes, and the small chambers are placed one above the other to form thirteen stories which have been partially connected in the last years by narrow and steep iron stairs. The last tiers, however, are not yet accessible (Fig. 2). According to a Qing inscription carved at the site, dated the fourth year of Xianfeng [50] (1854), originally there were 17,000 images. In 1935-36, at least one third of the sculpture in the southern section of the cliff was destroyed when the Shaanxi-Sichuan road was built. At present there are 400 niches with a total of 7,000 sculptures.²²

The Thousand Buddhas Cliff is chiefly a Tang site. This assertion rests both

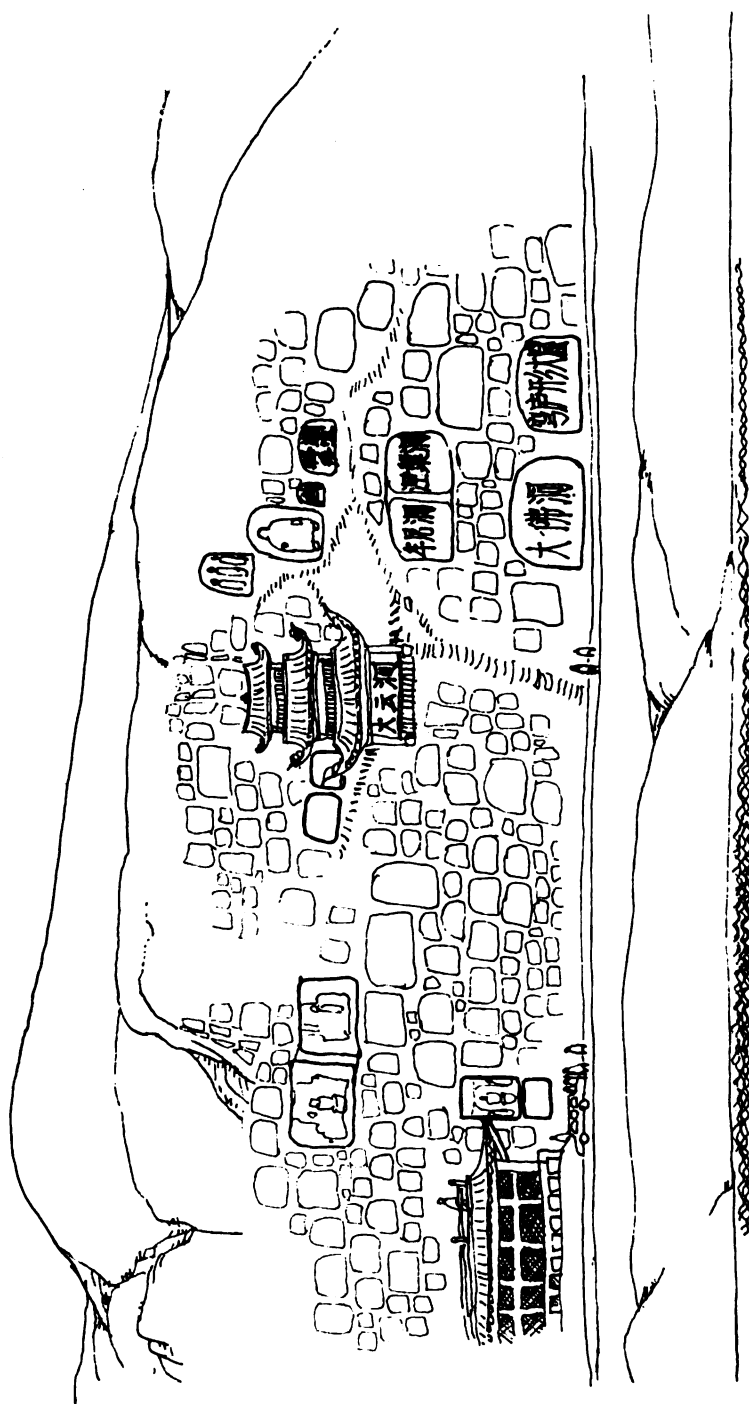


Figure 2 THOUSAND BUDDHAS CLIFF, GUANGYUAN

on the availability of many inscriptions of that period and on the style of the sculpture itself. The earliest Tang inscription is found outside the Dayundong [51] (Great Cloud Grotto) which is situated at the very center of the cliff. It records that the senior official Feng Gang, Prefect of Yizhou, in the seventh day of the sixth month, third year of Kaiyüan (715), made a pious contribution [52].²³ The tablet clearly commemorates a donation made by the Prefect. Its wording does not justify the mistaken inference by some scholars that Feng Gang was responsible for initiating carvings at the site.²⁴

Although at present the Thousand Buddhas Cliff has chiefly Tang evidence, the carving activity at the site began earlier than Tang. The *Shu Zhong Ming Sheng Ji* [53], in Chapter 24, quotes the poem *Ti Lizhou Bei Fokan Ji* [54], composed by the Tang official Su Yan [55], who visited the Thousand Buddhas Cliff in the Kaiyüan era, about 723. Su Yan celebrated in his verses the existence of thousands of sculptures and the fact that the place was visited by numerous people.²⁵ Consequently, during the eighth century, the Thousand Buddhas Cliff was already a thriving Buddhist site, not at all at its initial stage of development. The second finding which justifies a pre-Tang beginning is the very existence of sculpture whose style is not Tang, but possibly Wei. The monumental grotto Da Fo Dong [56] (Big Buddha Grotto), one of the largest (if not the largest) at the site, is located in the southern section of the cliff, at street level. Its monumental images – a Buddha four meters high, two Bodhisattvas and two monks slightly shorter – although very damaged and recently repaired, are unmistakably related to Northern Wei style, especially that of Maijishan [57], Gansu.²⁶ These early sculptures are not backed by inscriptions. Perhaps more pre-Tang evidence was available prior to destroying the cliff in order to build the road.

Above the Big Buddha Grotto, at the cliff's mid-level, there are two adjacent chambers, of square shape, with representations of Śākyamuni preaching and of Śākyamuni's Parinirvāṇa. They are not reachable by stairs and I could view them only from the road below. The Śākyamuni group consists of nine images, approximately life-size (Pl. 13). The central Buddha is portrayed seated, assisted by Ānanda and Kāśyapa and the two Bodhisattvas, Avalokiteśvara and Mahāsthāmapraptā. Below them, at each corner of the platform, are placed two Vajrapāṇi. At their feet, two lions crouch on their hind legs. All the above images are in the round. The Nāga and Asura behind them, under the shade of the two jewelled trees, are carved in low relief. In addition, ten life-size disciples are represented on the chamber's surrounding walls. A brilliant technical novelty is displayed in the execution of this scene. This is, the ability to cut through the stone so that the tree components – trunks, branches, leaves – are rendered by piercing the surface like a lace. This backdrop of trees and the heavenly gathering leaning against it, become a three-dimensional screen placed in the center of the chamber. It reaches as far as the ceiling, dividing the room in two halves and one can walk around it.

Equally inventive and novel are the ornamental and iconographic devices applied to the execution of the Buddha's halo and throne. The halo has a double shape, the inner being a peach, the outer a curved shell surmounted by a *cintamāṇi*, or flaming jewel. The throne rests on a polygonal base embellished by at least eight elephant heads which project out of the structure.²⁷ In front of the Buddha there is an incense burner placed on a low cabriole stand. This outburst of creativity is also accompanied by the excellence applied to the carving of the images. Particularly handsome are the Buddha and the Bodhisattvas, each one exquisitely modelled. The Bodhisattvas are lavishly adorned; their torsos are partially covered by gauze-like drapes. All the images were once gilded and painted. Traces of gilt are still visible, but the paint is recent.

In the adjacent chamber, Buddha's final release, Parinirvāṇa is carved in an unconventional, brilliant manner (Pl. 14). The Buddha, without head, lies on an unadorned platform. He is rendered as if life has just left the softly modelled, relaxed body. His left leg is still raised, slightly flexed. In contrast, the two Bodhisattvas, standing against the Sāla trees, are tensely erect. Two dragons climb the trees wrapping their bodies around the trunks. The trees' branches, upon reaching the ceiling, curve and spread out on its surface in a profusion of jewelled leaves. The space is airy and uncluttered. Behind Buddha's body, the disciples bend in sorrow. They were carved only from the waist up.²⁸ Regrettably, only one has survived intact.

The surrounding walls of the chamber were embellished with sculptures in niches and with two panels of narrative scenes on the (viewer's) left wall. At present, only half of the panels are extant. Since in the photo the scenes are hardly discernible, a drawing is supplied (Fig 3). Two groups are represented, one exclusively of men, the other of women. The men wear hoods. They are partly discernible as they emerge from a mountainous landscape. They are rendered in all kinds of poses and from different angles. Situated near a blazing fire, they are portrayed in animated discussion. The women, one of them shown seated, are carved with the same degree of liveliness and psychological observation. Their attire is that of commoners; their hair is modestly piled on top of the head. Most noteworthy is the successful handling of the spatial recession. The scene may refer to a Buddhist story of a miracle which I am unable to identify.

The grottoes presented next are located in the upper levels of the cliff, south section. They are all reachable by stairs. In one of these small chambers is shown the *Lotus Sūtra's* episode of Śākyamuni and Prabhutaratna making a joint appearance. The two Buddhas are seated side by side on a rather tall altarpillar (Pls. 15, 16). The screen behind them does not reach up to the ceiling and is not complemented by the foliate canopy. In comparison to the previous chamber with the Śākyamuni group, this is a simpler and more linear setting. The carving techniques used are also dissimilar. The main images, the



Figure 3 NARRATIVE SCENES ON THE NORTH WALL OF THE NIRVANA GROTTO THOUSAND BUDDHAS CLIFF, GUANGYUAN

two Buddhas, two disciples, two Bodhisattvas, are executed in high relief; the Demigods of the Eight Classes, instead, are executed in *staccato*. Their arrangement is as follows: a group of three is placed at the sides of each Buddha, two demi-gods are placed between the halos of the two Buddhas (not visible in the photo). Their bodies are summarily and partially indicated. Particularly interesting are the three heads at the (viewer's) right (Pl. 17), a vivid contrast of types. The demonic figure with protruding fangs holding the child, and the image wearing the lion-headdress recur often at other sites. The main images are life-size. The Buddhas are characterized wearing differently draped garments. Their hand-gestures are basically the same, but for a slight variation in the way their hand is placed on the folded legs (one Buddha places it palmdown, the other Buddha clasps an object). The Bodhisattvas are among the most accomplished at the site and almost intact. They are distinguished by elegance of bearing, refinement of attire and headdress – tall chignons forming a volute – and Olympian detachment (Pl. 18). This group has not been repainted, thus the slight traces of color and the gilding may be quite ancient. It is possible to walk around this altar. Niches of various sizes with different numbers of images are carved all around the walls. Some are unfinished.

The following are hollow niches, placed above the chamber of the two Buddhas Śākyamuni and Prabhūtaratna. In one there is a monumental seated Buddha, probably Maitreya, at least three times life-size, in a good state of preservation (Pl. 19). He is attended by a single Heavenly King, at his right, of miniscule size. In the other niche there is a triad formed by a Buddha flanked by two Bodhisattvas, all of them standing and slightly over life-size (Pl. 20). The Buddha holds a jewelled wheel in the left hand. In the lower part of the left wall (viewer's) some small figures are carved. Perhaps they are the donors, husband and wife with their youngsters. The last group may have been carved in Middle-Late Tang.

Next to the monumental Maitreya there is a small grotto with a Parinirvāṇa representation (Pl. 21). The protagonists are about 50 centimeters tall. The interpretation differs from the Nirvāṇa discussed previously. Buddha lies on his right side on a low platform covered by a draped cloth. The ten disciples, most of them damaged, stand or kneel behind Buddha. The entire group is sheltered by two Sāla trees whose summits blend with the ceiling. Two Bodhisattvas stand at each side of the platform, while two Vajrapāṇi, in a threatening pose, guard the entrance to the grotto. A grieving image kneels on a lotus by Buddha's side and seems to hold Buddha's hand. The costume and headdress of this mourner suggest a feminine rather than masculine personage. Is the mourner Queen Māyā?²⁹

The Dayundong, or Great Cloud Grotto is the largest at the site (height 3.8 meters, width 5.6 meters, depth 10.6 meters) and is located in the central section of the cliff. It is comparable to a temple hall. Here is to be found the

important 715 inscription commemorating the donation of Feng Gang and several other Tang inscriptions, previously discussed. The name Dayundong reminds one of the *Great Cloud Sūtra*, conveniently discovered at the time of Wuchao's rise to imperial power and used by the Empress to legitimize her seizing control of the dynasty.³⁰ The same name was given to the state-supported temples, Dayunsi [58], which were built in every prefecture of the empire. Although the Dayun Grotto at Guangyüan postdates by ten years the death of the Empress, it may still reflect an act of homage to Wuzetian in her native place.

This large chamber has an unusual shape (Fig. 4). At its center is placed a Buddha, 1.50 meters tall, whose back is connected to the wall dividing the rear part of the grotto in two halves (Pl. 22). The Buddha belongs to the Udyana type. It is identified by the Chinese as Maitreya, in spite of the standing posture on a double lotus base. The Buddha, in addition to a large mandorla, wears a rounded and a pointed halo detached from the wall and curving over the image. Furthermore, a tree canopy in the shape of a shell projects above the Buddha to give him shelter. The Nagāpuspa tree (Dragon Flower tree) under which Maitreya will attain Enlightenment is the only iconographic trait associated with Maitreya. Perhaps, there is, after all, a connection with Empress Wu who was regarded as a living Maitreya. The Buddha's face has been recently gilded.

The two sections of the rear wall of the Dayundong have two large niches, basically identical in style and iconography. They display a Buddha flanked by two monks and two Vajrapāṇi placed outside the niche. The lateral walls of the Dayundong are entirely covered with representations of Guanyin, each 0.50 meter tall. They form four superimposed rows, one hundred and forty Guanyin in all. The southern lateral wall of the Dayundong recedes to form a rather deep niche (Fig. 5a) whose images show a higher level of execution than those in the main chamber.

The group of this subsidiary niche consists of eleven sculptures; a central Buddha with Ānanda holding a casket (Pl. 23) and Kāśyapa, two Bodhisattvas, one of them Guanyin (Pl. 24), two Vajrapāṇi, two Heavenly Kings, and two donors. The arrangement of the figures and the niche's layout are novel (Fig. 5b). The Vajrapāṇi, Heavenly Kings and donors are all placed outside the niche, alongside the walls, but at different intervals. Buddha's throne is the focal point. It is a characteristic of Sichuan sculpture, encountered at several other sites, to distribute the images in space so as to form an animated, dynamic assembly.

Buddha's lotus throne also departs from the type usually encountered in the northern provinces. Its shape is more complex, its decoration richer. This tall, oval throne consists of a base, a middle, and an upper section. The upper part is a lotus with upturned, closely serrated and thickly modelled petals; the middle part is profusely embellished with festoons of jewels and tassels of

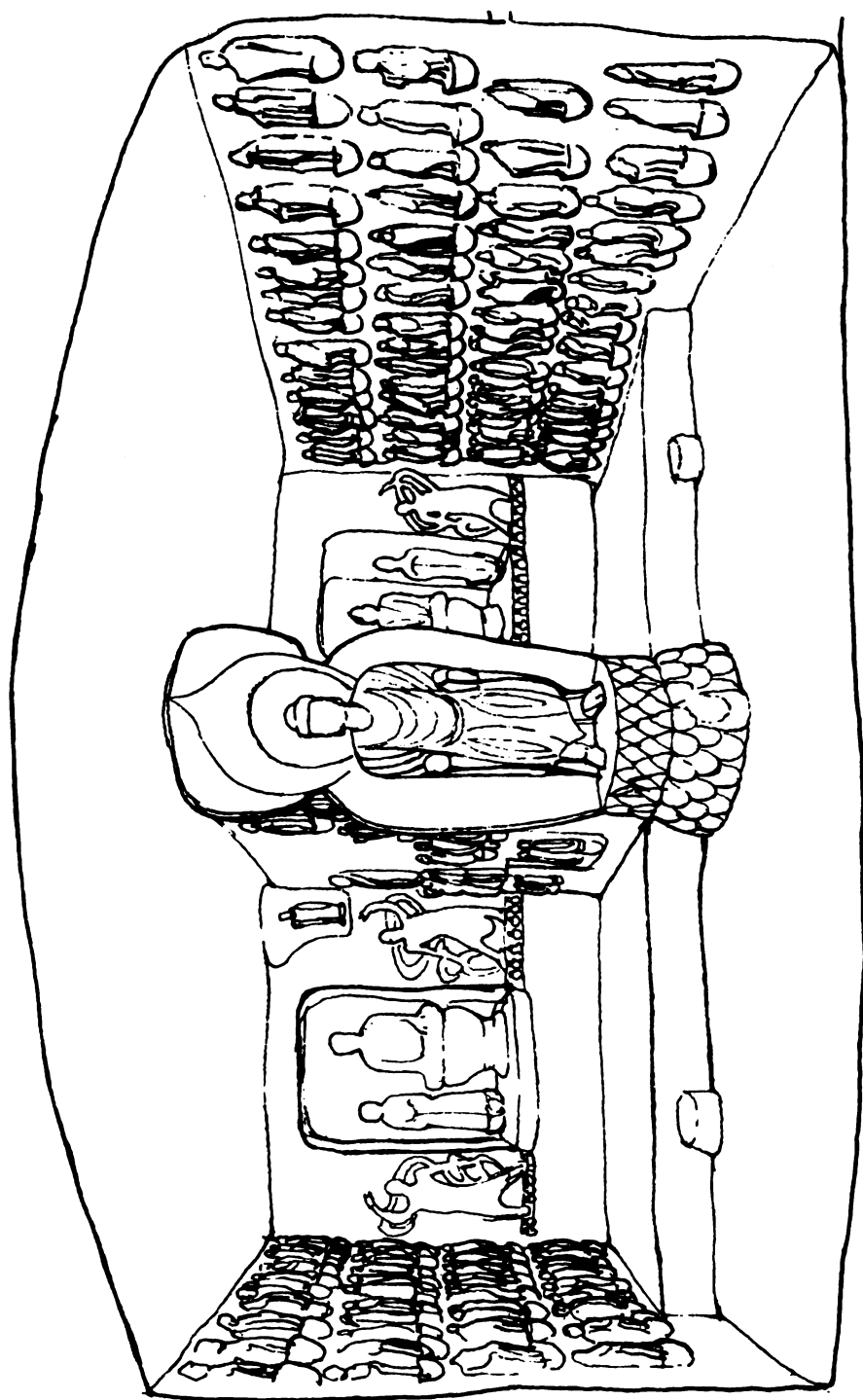
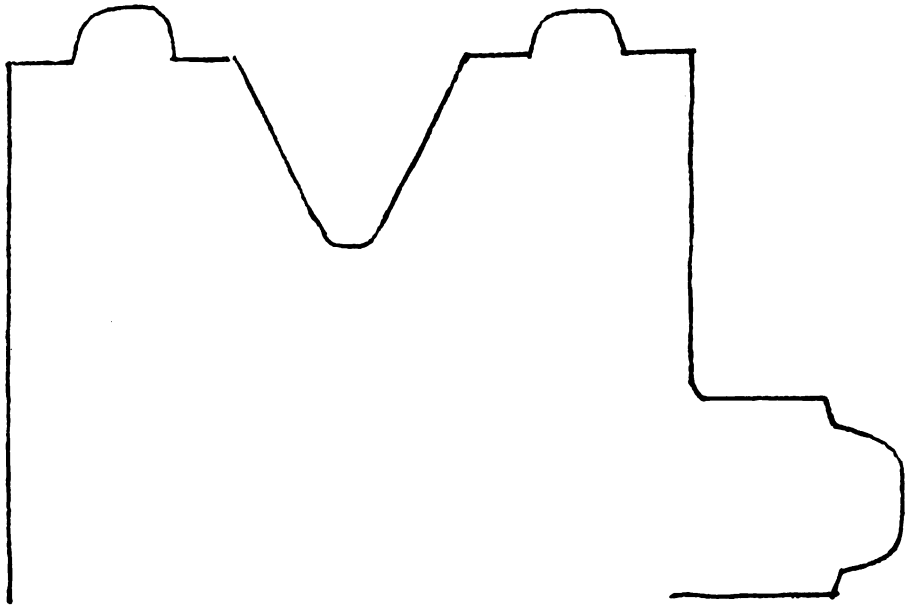
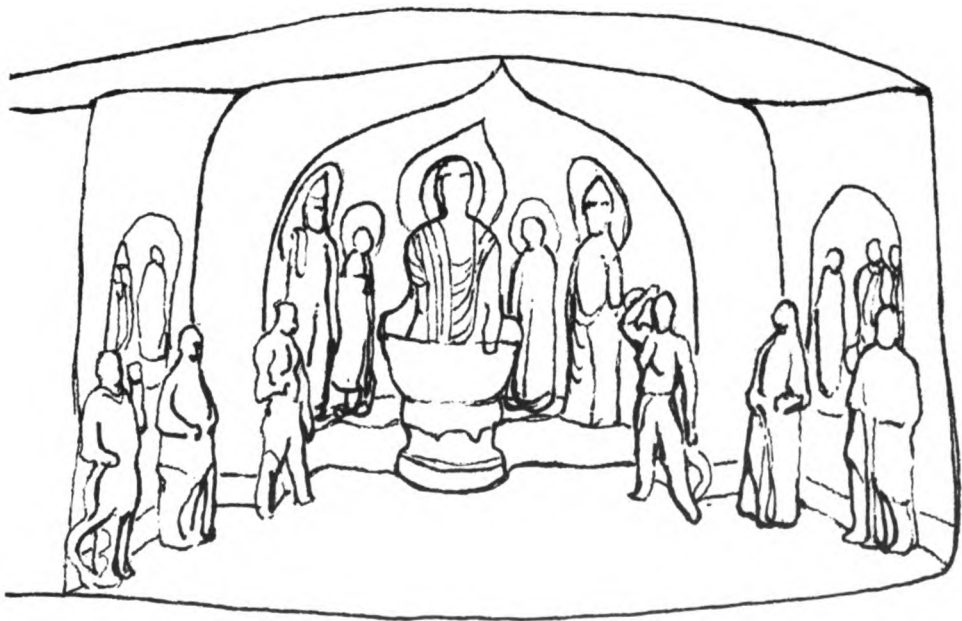


Figure 4 DAYUNDONG, THOUSAND BUDDHAS CLIFF, GUANGYUAN

S. N



a.



b.

Figure 5 a. PLAN OF DAYUNDONG WITH SUBSIDIARY GROTTO
b. BUDDHA GROUP IN SUBSIDIARY GROTTO

pearls. The same tendency to the ornate is displayed in the frame of the elegant ogival arch enclosing the niche, in which runs a continuous scroll. One is keenly aware of the rich inventiveness, of the many pleasing refinements which the Sichuanese carver was able to display.

Above the Dayundong was built a pavilion with upturned, curved, triple-tiered eaves (fig. 2). From the Dayundong one can climb to the level above through a narrow, iron ladder. On this upper level, a ledge has been hewn in the face of the cliff. It gives access to some small, beautiful High Tang chambers. Among them is the Chien Fo Dong [59], or Thousand Buddhas Grotto. Regrettably, only a drawing can be submitted (Fig. 6). This small chamber belongs to the central altarpillar type; in this instance, the pillar is connected with the ceiling. The heavenly group was carved from it and one can walk around it. The entire surface of surrounding walls is covered with the Thousand Buddhas pattern, hence its appellation. There are seventeen life-size images, one of the largest groups at the site. It includes a central Buddha portrayed seated. He is flanked by Ānanda carrying a book and Kāśyapa with joined hands. The Buddha is further assisted by two Bodhisattvas, one a Guanyin. He is guarded by two Heavenly Kings and two Vajrapāṇi placed in the foreground. He is watched over by the Demi-gods of the Eight Classes. All of them, regardless of rank, find shelter under the canopy of two jewelled trees. The trees, upper branches and luscious foliage spread all over the ceiling; their delicate shape is alive and quivering. In this group, the carver mastered the difficulty of modelling so many images which overlap and recede in space and achieved a well-knit, integrated unit.

The techniques of high and low reliefs are again used to full advantage. The images of the eight supernatural protectors are in low relief, the main images in high relief. The tree and its crown display the cut-through technique which allows the light to penetrate and create an animated, painterly effect. The same intent is visible in the lavish decoration of the throne. In the semidarkness of the grotto (the entrance is quite narrow) the images capture one's eyes with so many different expressions. Above all, the demonic, yet not malevolent gazes of the eight supernatural beings exercise a strong spell. At the same level of the cliff, at the end of the passage way, is a grotto displaying an imposing gathering (Pls. 25, 26). The group consists of Śākyamuni, his two disciples, two Bodhisattvas, two Heavenly Kings, two Vajrapāṇi, all placed in a semi-circular arrangement. The carving is of good quality, although less ornate than the previous example.

Plates 27 and 28 show some of the lowest niches in the northern section of the cliff. A large pavilion has recently been built here against the cliff. From its roof, one can study more closely two chambers of the central pillar-type otherwise inaccessible (Pl. 29). The chambers are adjacent and portray two assemblies, one centered around a Buddha seated in Western pose, perhaps Maitreya. The first chamber is discussed next (Pl. 30). The central structure is

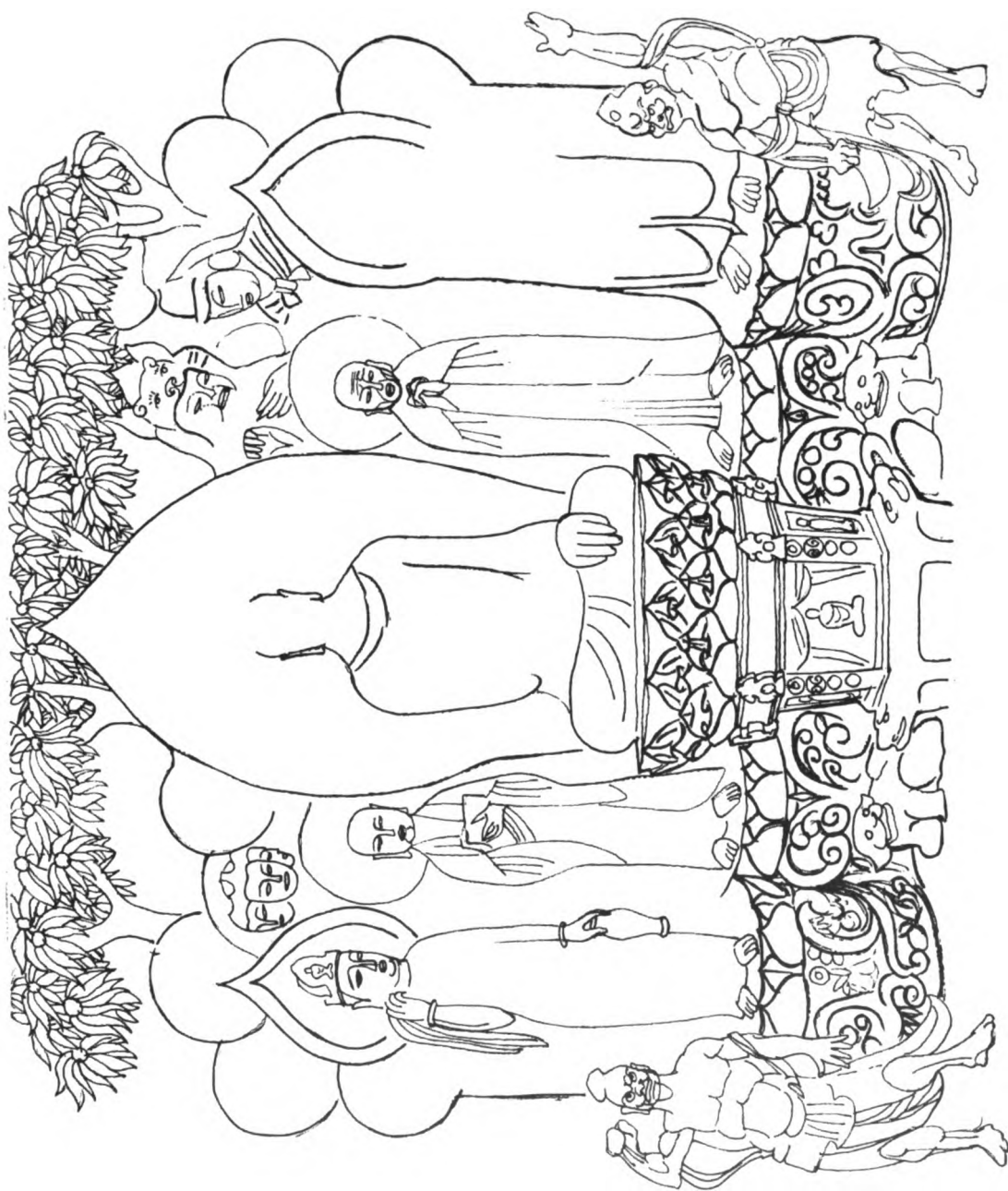


Figure 6 THE CHIENFODONG, THOUSAND BUDDHAS CLIFF,
GUANGYUÁN

formed by the following elements: a large platform on and around which are gathered the images and the perforated screen formed by the trees. As usual, it is possible to circumambulate this structure. Buddha, the right shoulder exposed, sits performing the *bhūmisparśa mudrā* (Touching the Earth gesture). Buddha's legs are interlocked and form a wide saddle. This pose is an appropriate and sturdy base for the image which displays a noticeably inflated chest and a squarish face. This icon differs from those previously described; it is of a much heavier type. The heaviness is further stressed by the jewelry hanging from his chest and by the weighty crown surmounting the head. This Buddha is related to the "Jewelled Buddha" carved about 700 at Longmen, in the northern and southern Leigutai Caves, an icon introduced from India during the reign of Empress Wu.³¹ His attendants are Ānanda and Kāśyapa, two Bodhisattvas and two Vajrapāṇi, shown in exaggerated *tribhanga* poses. The Bodhisattvas also recall the iconographic type carved at Longmen at the end of the seventh century, as they stand in hip-shot pose, holding a branch of willow and a *kundika* in the case of the Guanyin, without those attributes in the case of Mahāsthāmaprāpta. The throne's shape is also unusual. It is a very wide Sumeru throne articulated in two parts, the upper one resting on two Atlantes. The throne has also a tall square back adorned along the edge by eleven small Buddhas. The screen which acts as a background to the divine assembly is formed by four trees: two of them merge with the throne's back. From the leafy canopy two *apsarases* are shown descending in swift flight to join the group below. The Spirits of Wind and Thunder are also depicted next to the angels. Who or what is represented in the wreath above Buddha's head is not clear. Life-size musicians, six on each lateral wall, serenade the gods. The name Musicians Grotto derives from their presence. The lightness and airiness of the background act as a strong contrast to the sturdy and solemn images.

With the following concluding remarks, I wish to stress the salient characteristics encountered at the Thousand Buddhas Cliff. The altar-pillar occupying the center of the chamber, a foil to the divine group, is a completely new structural device not found at the other sites in Sichuan. The decorative screen, which stresses naturalistic and painterly effects, may have found inspiration in the much smaller altar pieces executed in Hebei during the Northern Qi dynasty. The Guanyūan version, however, explored completely new iconographic themes and interpreted the arrangement of the figures in a much more dynamic, spirited manner, on a much larger scale. At this site, the arrangement of the images displays also a complexity seldom met in the sculpture of northern China. Even in the largest groups, the carver was able to achieve a well-knit and balanced unity. Within these groups, he also emphasized the interrelationship of the various images as well as their hierarchical status. Only the Tang murals of Dunhuang display similar qualities. The arrangement at Guanyūan, in my view, may have profited

from the spirited group composition carved during the Liang dynasty, such as those found in the Wan Fo Temple, Chengdu.³²

At this site, one is also introduced to the stunningly decorative inventions lavished on the socles and on the arched frames of the niches. Some of these traits will be noticed again in other places in Sichuan.

The majority of the sculpture at the Thousand Buddhas Cliff was carved during High Tang. It is characterized by well proportioned forms, soft and round, complemented by unperturbed and serene expressions, and contained gestures. The last statement does not apply to the image of the Vajrapāṇi, which are dramatically expressed with sweeping, opposed curves, and violent gestures. The sculptures of Guangyüan seem to reflect iconographic trends which were established at Longmen. Stylistically, however, there was not a dependence.

Guanyin Yan, The Guanyin Cliff

The site is located fifteen kilometers from the town. It is accessible only by a dirt road. The cliffs rise in completely isolated, lonely surroundings dominating the slow flow of the Jialing River below. There are about 150 niches, fairly small (Pls. 31, 32). The majority are well preserved. Their execution may be ascribed to the eighth and ninth century on the basis of style. The extant inscriptions cover the span of time from 751 to 833.³³ The niches are carved to form from three to four tiers; only the lower tiers are accessible. Most of the niches display triads or pentads. There are numerous representations of Guanyin, hence the name of the site, and also a few reliefs of Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra. The site has not yet been surveyed nor published.

Bazhong

Bazhong is situated 85 kilometers southeast of Guangyüan. In Bazhong there are four locations with Buddhist sculpture carved on the slopes of the hills which surround the town in the four directions. Conveniently, therefore, these locations are named Eastern, Southern, Western, and Northern Cliffs. In April 1986, when I visited Bazhong, the eastern Cliff could not be reached because of a landslide.³⁴ I was, however, fortunate to visit and study the other three. In Bazhong County, furthermore, 35 kilometers south-east of the town, is the Shuiningsi [60] (Shuining Temple) site which offers nine small niches of High Tang sculpture. All these places are introduced below.

The Southern Cliff

The Southern Cliff is discussed first because it is the richest and the best

preserved in Bazhong, although not the earliest. It is located in the Chengshan Hill [61]. The Administration and the Cultural Relics Bureau of Bazhong are completing the construction of a large roof supported by concrete pillars over the central section of the cliff, called Shenxian [62] where the majority of the niches are concentrated, namely niches numbers 27-94 (Fig. 7).³⁵ In the future, perhaps, elevated passageways will be constructed to allow a closer look at the five tiers of niches hollowed out in the cliff (Pls. 33, 34). The recent repainting of most of the sculpture was undertaken as a measure of protection, rather debatable, against the erosion of the stone by weather and pollution. It has resulted in some gaudy effects and also it has made difficult the appreciation of the original style. The painting aims at delaying the process of disintegration of the red sandstone cliff left unprotected until the early 1980s.

According to the *Bazhou Gazetteer* [63], as far back as the Tang, during the administration of Yan Wu [64], about 760, a large monastic complex, the Guangfusi [65], was erected at the site. It was destroyed in Ming, rebuilt in Qing, and again destroyed.³⁶ Presently there is no temple at the site, only a couple of recently built look-out pavilions. The site is now used as a park. At the site, on the boulder called Yunpingshi [66] is carved the inscription *Zouqing Bazhou Nankansi Ti Mingbiao* [67], or Memorial Inscription of the Southern Cliff Temple, dated the third year of Ganyüan [68] (760) which commemorates the Tang Prefect of Bazhou, Yan Wu, not only as an important benefactor, but as the originator of the site. If reliable, this inscription is the earliest document at the Southern Cliff.³⁷

The reliability of this record has recently been questioned by the Chinese scholar Gu Sen [69]. He points out that regarding the official titles of Yan Wu as recorded in the carved inscription, there are serious discrepancies with the Tang histories; the description of the site, in the tablet, does not correspond to the actual lay-out; the text of the inscription does not tally with that of the same recorded in the *Xing Di Bei Mu* by the Song writer Wang Xiang [70]. The latter Song transcription respects, instead, both the historical record of Yan Wu and the topography of the site. The fact that the tablet inscription at the Southern Cliff goes hand in hand with several Qing sources (the *Bazhongxian Zhi* and the *Bazhou Zhi* [71]) casts serious doubt about the reliability of the document.³⁸

At the Southern Cliff there are, however, many inscriptions dated Tang which are genuine. They commemorate the making of the images in the niches, or testify to later repairing of the carvings. They are introduced in chronological sequence. Niche 71 is dated the twenty-eighth year of Kaiyüan, second month (740); its Sakyamuni group was donated by the official Zhang Lin [72].

Niche 69 is dated the twenty-eighth year of Kaiyüan, twelfth month (740); its Śākyamuni group was donated by the official Dang Shouye [73].

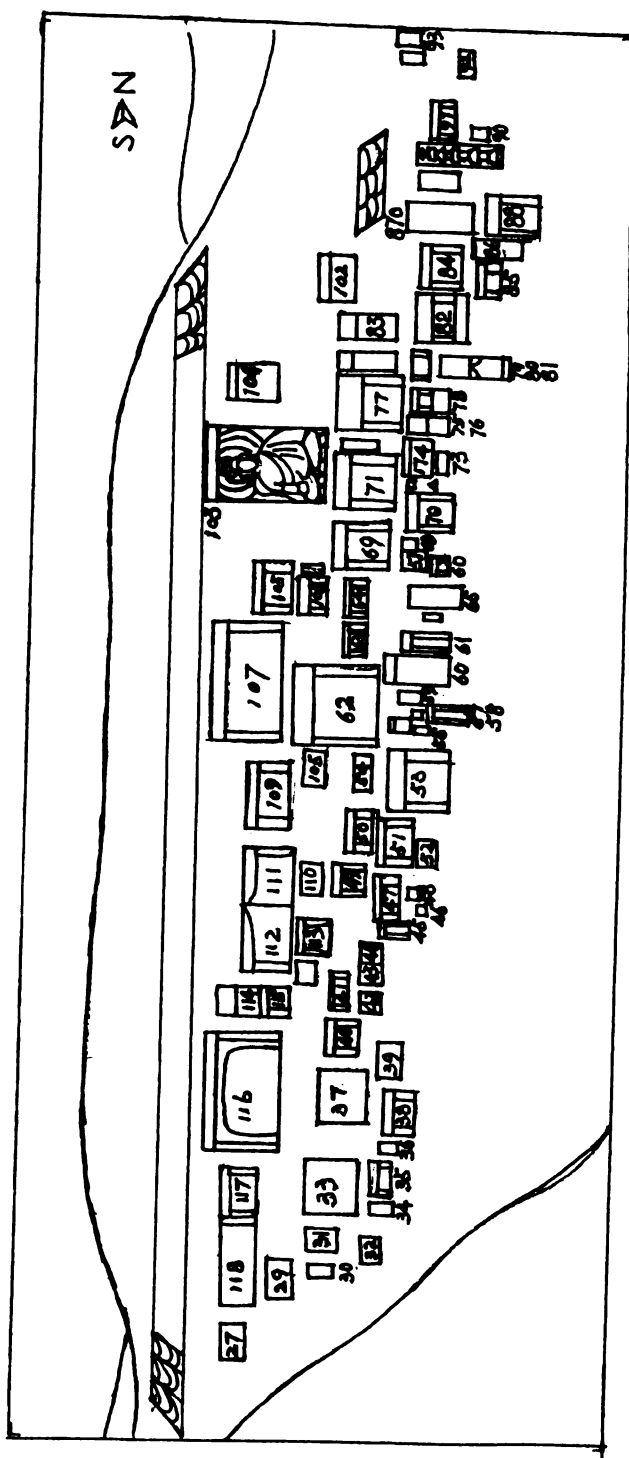


Figure 7 SOUTHERN CLIFF, BAZHONG

Niche 89 is dated the seventh year of Tianbao [74], seventh month (748); the donation involved the carving of a seven-stories *stūpa*.

Niche 87 is dated the second year of Chienyüan [75] (759); its Guanyin was donated by the already mentioned Governor of Bazhou, Yan Wu.

Niche 93 is dated the sixth year of Huichang [76] (846); its Heavenly Guardian King was donated by the Prefect Yong (?) Yangzheng [77].

Niche 65 is dated the fourth year of Chienfu [78] (877); the donation involved the carving of a Vaiśravaṇa image.³⁹

The inscriptions recording the repair of previously carved images at the site are the following:

Niche 101 underwent repair in the fourth year of Zhonghe [79] (884) following the donation of the official Zhang Xiang [80] who had fled to Sichuan with Emperor Xi Zhong's court.

Niche 71 underwent repair in the fourth year of Guangqi [81] (888) through a donation by the official Li Sihong [82] whose name appears several times at the site.

Niche 77 was repaired the first year of Wende [83] (889) through the donation of the same benefactor Li Sihong. An Hāriti group is specifically mentioned as having undergone repair.

Other epigraphic evidence is available between the Niches 80 and 82 dated the second year of Chienyüan (759), near Niche 103 (877), and Niche 62 (902).⁴⁰

A thorough discussion of the sculpture of the Southern Cliff is not yet possible on the basis of the material at my disposal. The following are remarks concerning the iconographic novelties and the stylistic peculiarities based on the evidence available. Niche 69, dated 735 by inscription, is the earliest. Its representation is fairly simple and does not offer iconographic surprises, portraying Śākyamuni attended by two disciples, two Bodhisattvas, two Heavenly Kings and two Vajrapāṇi (Pl. 35). Small-sized male and female donors are carved on the Vajrapāṇi's base. The images display chubby, thick-set bodies, squarish faces with round eyes. The recent coat of paint distorts their pristine appearance. The Vajrapāṇi's threatening posture and wrath lack conviction because of the excessive use of caricature. These observations can be applied to other niches with similar organization of images, notably the caves 70 and 71. The latter also offers a Śākyamuni group and is dated 740. Niche 53 perhaps may be ascribed to the same time since the arrangement is similar to that of Niche 70 with the addition of two Pratyeka Buddhas and of the Demi-gods of the Eight Classes (Pl. 36). As in Guangyüan, the Demigods are carved in bas-relief.

At the Southern Cliff there are several representations of Guanyin. The Guanyin in Niche 87, in the northern section of the cliff, is dated 759 (no illustration available). Its donor was the Prefect Yan Wu. The Bodhisattva is represented holding the attributes of the willow branch and the ambrosia

bottle. Pose and gestures, aside from the attributes, are related to similar Guanyin carved at Longmen.⁴¹ The opulent jewelry adorning body and head, the detailed carving of the garment, and the successful rendering of the soft, transparent cloth are Sichuanese peculiarities. The roundness of the forms and the spontaneity expressed by the face place this image among the most attractive at the site. This is especially true when one compares it with the Guanyin of Niche 60 (Pl. 37). The exaggerated hip-thrust pose of the latter creates an artificial effect by excessively contrasting the movement of the upper and lower torso. Many other representations of Guanyin are available, in the Niches 2, 5, 6, 16 (Pl. 38), 30, 34, 52, 56, 58, 59, 72, 87, 94. As at Longmen, in Bazhong the devotion for the Bodhisattva was also strongly felt.

Niche 89, dated 748, displays a peculiar *stūpa* structure (Pl.39). Its architectural components in ascending order are: a very tall base, two superimposed platforms (the lowest with festooned roof, the upper with curtained awning), and the *inner sanctum* shaped like a small Han building. Its roof is embellished with a mast and flattened circular disks. Each section displays different ornamental patterns such as vegetal scrolls, honey-combs, rosettes and medallions enclosed in jewelled frames. Heavenly beings occupy each section: the four Heavenly Kings, Bodhisattvas, and Vajrapāṇi are at each side of the *inner sanctum*. Two *apsarases* kneel at each side of the spire. The surface on either side of the pagoda is carved with the Thousand Buddhas pattern.

Niche 88 interprets the theme of the seven Buddhas, six of the Past and Śākyamuni of the Present (Pl. 40). In similar bronze examples, the seven are shown seated on the spread out branches of a tree. In this case, the imagery of the tree is maintained and transformed in a stylized, wavy pattern issuing from an incense burner guarded by two cherubim. The attendants are two Bodhisattvas and two Vajrapāṇi.

The niches discussed next are grouped because they share a similar, novel iconography. In Niche 116 is shown a central Buddha seated on a double lotus, performing the *dharmacakra mudrā* (Turning of the Wheel gesture). The attendants are two major lateral Bodhisattvas, also seated, and at least twenty-five minor Bodhisattvas (Pls. 41, 42). These are also shown seated, in relaxed poses, on lotuses which grow from long stems all seemingly connected. The arrangement of these images forms four tiers. The Bodhisattvas are portrayed deeply immersed in their thoughts, not involved with the Law being preached. They also appear distracted by personal ties with one another (Pl. 43). In this audience, the disciples are conspicuously absent, but the Heavenly King of the North, Vaiśravaṇa who carries the *stūpa*, is present (Pl. 44). The Heavenly King of the West with the sword and the two Vajrapāṇi are also portrayed.

This scene displays iconographic elements usually associated with the representation of the Western paradise which is presided by the triad of

Amitābha, Avalokiteśvara (Guanyin) and Mahāsthāmapraptā, accompanied by a throng of Bodhisattvas. This scene, however, lacks the representation of the souls being reborn and the backdrop of the heavenly buildings. Iconographically, it is linked to the Early Tang interpretation of the same theme at Dunhuang.⁴² The large niche is one of the most finely executed and best preserved at the site. Much inventiveness was lavished in the execution of the frame which was conceived in two parts: an outside squarish frame, and an inner arched frame. All along the edge of the second were carved musicians alternating with small sized triads of a Buddha and two Bodhisattvas. Niche 33 is less fanciful, but makes use of the same composition. It is located below 116, towards the South (Pl. 41). In this case, the two major Bodhisattvas sit closer to the central Buddha. The other Bodhisattvas kneel or sit in different attitudes on the lotuses which crowd the entire surface of the walls. In this niche were carved at least fifty-nine images.

Niche 62 displays yet another version of the same theme (Pl. 34). Although similar to the arrangement of Cave 116, the overall effect is more controlled, since the minor Bodhisattvas are shown seated on even rows of lotuses. The interaction among them is less lively.

The only visual record available of Niche 107, one of the largest in the southern section of the cliff, is a partial view in Plate 34. The iconographic novelty in this case consists of an assembly of three Buddhas, the central one recognized as the most important by its four attendants – two monks and two Bodhisattvas. The lateral Buddhas are assisted only by two Bodhisattvas. Two Heavenly Kings and two Vajrapāṇi are also part of the group. The central Buddha performs the *vitarka mudrā* (Argumentation gesture) which is associated with Maitreya, thus raising the question whether this is a representation of Maitreya, in his last incarnation, instead of the three Buddhas of the Past, Present, and Future. The Maitreya cult became very popular under Empress Wu, as she herself was regarded as an incarnation of the deity.⁴³

The huge Buddha of Niche 103, a seated image (4.45 meters high) portrayed in the *bhumisparsa mudrā*, is called Vairocana, but has none of the attributes which justify such an identification (Pls. 45, 46). Two much smaller, caricature-like Vajrapāṇi guard him at the entrance. In spite of the fact that his facial features are very distorted by recent layers of paint, one can still recognize the relationship of this image with the “Jewelled Buddha” type represented at the southern and northern Leigutai [84] Caves, Longmen. I have previously pointed out the presence of this iconography at the Thousand Buddhas Cliff, Guangyüan (Pl. 30) and discussed it.⁴⁴ Its recurrence at Bazhong shows that the icon was spreading South. This Buddha type is easily recognizable by its excessively inflated chest and the resulting disproportion of upper and lower body; the tall, ponderous crown; the heavy jewelry adorning

the bare torso (a collar-like necklace) and the right upper arm (in the form of a foliate armlet).

Three Buddhas are displayed in Niche 83 (Pl. 47). The central image is a seated, double-headed Buddha shown performing the *bhumisparsa mudrā*, but in reverse: his left hand, instead of his right, touches the ground. The two attending Buddhas, both shown standing, are also peculiar. One is pointing with one hand to the sky, the other keeps both hands at chest level and does not perform a gesture. All three are given fiery haloes, the central Buddha an additional fiery aureole. Their garments are rather unorthodox, namely the scalloped capelet worn by the central image, and the outer robe worn by the lateral Buddhas. Perhaps in this niche were gathered three of a series of famous images from sacred places in India, which are represented in painting at Dunhuang.⁴⁵ These are very rare sculptural interpretations of the famous Indian images.

At the Southern Cliff, the representation of Vaiśravaṇa occurs several times. Sometimes the image is represented individually, sometimes as part of a larger group. The Heavenly Guardian of the North in Niche 65, dated 877 (Pl. 33) is a short and stocky figure, aesthetically not impressive. In this type, however, one can observe the blend of caricature and humour so frequent in Sichuan sculpture. The text of the inscription specifies that it was carved to bring good luck to the donor and keep calamities away from him. His bulging "evil eyes" are perhaps meant to work this magic. They stare out both in terror and surprise, achieving an unparalleled effect of humour. Similar images are portrayed in the Niches 16 (Pl. 38), 93, and 103 (Pl. 45).

The already mentioned Vaiśravaṇa guarding Niche 116 expressed other concerns (Pl. 44). Its pose reflects the traditional Tang interpretation, standing on a dwarfish creature with the right leg flexed, one hand placed at the waist, the other raised to hold the *stūpa*. In its rendering there is also a human and heroic aspect, perhaps a reflection of the military glories described in the epic of the Three Kingdoms which takes place also in Bazhong. The face of Vaiśravaṇa is not an anonymous mask, but that of a warrior. Thus, regional peculiarities may have been incorporated in this interpretation. The convention of wearing straw sandals instead of the customary leather boots worn by the northern Chinese guardians is exclusively Sichuanese. The same type of heavenly king is shown in Niche 105.

The two representations of Hārītī and her children in the Niches 68 and 72 (Pls. 48, 49) testifies to the unconventionality of the Sichuanese carver in approaching religious themes. Hārītī, the ogress who devoured children, although dearly loving her own, was punished by Buddha who deprived her of her youngest. Only when she repented and converted did Buddha return the child to her. She became thereafter a protectress of children. Hārītī is very seldom represented in the sculpture of northern China, but is present at many sites in Sichuan executed in the Tang and Song periods. The fact that at

Bazhong Hārītī is portrayed in such a secular fashion – as a peasant woman watching over her brood, keeping the youngest affectionately on her lap, even nursing him – reveals to us that she may have become a deity especially venerated by the common people. When the believer worshipped Hārītī at the Southern Cliff, he perceived her as a mother and bestower of children, not as the ogress who had repented and submitted to Buddha. There is a directness and spontaneity in the two scenes usually associated with folk art. The name of the official Li Sihong appears in two inscriptions: he sponsored the making and the repair, respectively, of two Hārītī images.

The decoration of the frames deserves attention in Bazhong County, especially at the Southern Cliff. High skills mark the carving of the images, great originality characterizes the execution of the frames' decor. Such lavish intricacy and originality of ornamentation have never graced the niches of northern China. Bazhong frames seldom make use of the familiar vocabulary of *apsarases* in flight, stylized flames, and *cintāmaṇi*. The majority of the frames seem to be replicas of entrance gates to affluent, local houses (Pl. 36). Being rather deep, they lead gradually to the interior of the niche. Their shape is chiefly square. Two pillars carved with floral patterns support the upper section, a roof with upturned eaves, on each side. Below the roof, the lintel is draped with swags of curtains, festoons of jewelled ropes, and further adorned with dangling tassels.

Gu Sen has emphasized the special ties which linked Bazhong to Changan.⁴⁶ A route called Mi Cang Dao [85] passing through the Da Ba [86] Mountains, connected Changan to Bazhou, while the route Jin Niu Dao cutting across the Qin Long [87] Mountains, linked Changan to Chengdu, having entered Sichuan at Guangyüan. Through the Mi Cang route several royal princes probably reached Bazhong, as did officials who had been promoted to their posts in the county. Among the royalty demoted here by Empress Wu were Li Shen, Prince of Ji [88], Li Ke, Prince of Wu [89], and Li Xian, Prince Zhanghuai [90]. Some died in Bazhong, some, stripped of their titles, were forced to become commoners. They brought to Bazhong a numerous retinue and settled down there. Gu Sen points out that during the Tang, places like Bazhong County became the residence of an upper class educated in the capital in contrast to the Southern Dynasties period when Sichuan was often occupied by transitory troops. The nobility and the administrators set the cultural mood; they strived to maintain in Sichuan the standard of living to which they were accustomed in the capital.

The production of Buddhist art in Bazhong should be viewed against this historical background. Gu Sen is convinced that the images at the Southern Cliff were not the product of the local culture, but issued from the gentry who had been forced to leave the court and had settled there. As a proof, he gives the birthplace of the donors mentioned in the inscriptions at the site. All of them were born in northern China.⁴⁷ Gu Sen's arguments are convincing; the

gentry who settled in Bazhong most likely sponsored the Buddhist art. I believe, however, that the carvers were Sichuanese, because the sculpture reflects a style and an interpretation of the subject matter different from those of northern China. The purely Sichuanese characteristics can be singled out by the marked secularization of certain themes (Hārītī, Vaiśravaṇa), by a noticeable slackening of iconographic rules (namely, in the scenes of Amitābha's Pure Land, in the groups formed by three Buddhas perhaps interpreting Maitreya's Triple Assembly), and lastly, by the decoration of the niches' frame which imitates architectonic formulas popular in the county.

The Western Cliff

The Western Cliff is located about two kilometers from the town of Bazhong and lies in a completely rural setting; although it is so near the urban center, one reaches the cliff by walking through rice paddies and prosperous fields of vegetables. Because of the way the cliffs cut through the fields in a swaying movement, it is also called Foyewan [91]. At the Western Cliff which is about ten meters high there are altogether thirty niches and small chambers. This site was developed earlier than the Southern Cliff. One of the small chambers, number 16, according to its inscription, was executed during the Sui Dynasty, in 609. Several small chambers, in style and iconography, can be ascribed to the same time or very shortly after. A cluster of niches, that is the Niches number 19 and 20 and those around them, were probably executed during the first half of the eighth century. Since the Cave 16 is securely dated, it is introduced first.

In its pristine state, Niche 16 must have been a splendid work. What is extant is a faint glimmer of that brilliance. The chamber is small (2.85 meters high, 2.20 meters wide, 2.46 meters deep) (Pl. 50). At the entrance, on the (viewer's) right is carved the inscription "the fifth year of the Daye era of the Sui" [92] (Pl. 51). Above the inscriptions, in a small alcove similar to a curtained, portable shrine, is carved a seated Maitreya (Pl. 52). According to the local people, originally fifty-four images were carved inside Niche 16. An accurate reconstruction of the group is impossible because many images have completely disappeared, others are badly deteriorated.

The chamber consists of two parts: a shallow outer part which serves as entrance, and a deeper, inner space. The division is further stressed by the arch which leads into the inner room. Outside the chamber, on each side, there are two heavenly guardians, while in the foreroom there are two Vajrapāṇi. Those at the right are better preserved (Pls. 51, 53). Inside the chamber, there is no trace of the image, a Buddha who sat against a flaming halo, still extant. The Buddha image was framed by two trees whose foliage still creeps over the ceiling. Above the halo were carved an Asura and a monk. The image

balancing the Asura, on the other side, was a Nāga whose dragon headdress is the only element left (Pl. 54). Alongside the lateral walls, the images were arranged overlapping, in varied poses. They were representations of Bodhisattvas, of the Demi-gods of the Eight Classes. Perhaps there were also donors and monks, no longer extant. On the walls, very few images are still distinguishable. At the left (viewer's), there is a figure with two heads, garbed as a monk, shown with the hands joined; below him, there is a child (Pl. 55). Next to them, two marauder-like types (demi-gods?) and a devout lay woman with halo were carved (Pl. 56).

Some of these personages, the Vajrapāṇi in particular, seem to be sculptural versions of painting. The Vajrapāṇi's *dhoti* is depicted flaring out to the side. The linearistic depiction of so many pleats, ropes of pearls, scarves carved in opposite directions suggests the violent thrust of the guardian. The ceiling of the niche was also painstakingly carved. The vault is ribbed and presents a slight curvature. A jewelled pagoda was also placed at the intersection point of the ribs, while in the ribbed sections were carved celestials carrying trays of fruits or playing instruments (Pls. 57, 58). Small scale Buddhas were also portrayed seated or standing on lotuses among the flying *apsarases* (Pl. 59).

The entrance to the foreroom is a miniature palatial gate, even richer than those found at the Southern Cliff (Pl. 60). It consists of a Han style roof with upturned eaves. The lintel below is decorated with mythical animals, such as dragons in the corner panels, two *xian* in the center panel, and floral scrolls. Pleated curtains hang from the lintel.

Niche number 5 is iconographically and stylistically related to number 16, although smaller, more crowded, and less skillfully executed (Pl. 61). The frame of the niche is oval with a filigree decoration. In the niche, three different planes are clearly used to achieve hierarchical order among the images. The large Buddha seated in Western pose dominates the entire group. The Bodhisattvas, in their turn, are taller than the monks, donors and Vajrapāṇi. But the Demigods of the Eight Classes are the tallest of all (Pl. 62). The guardian at the left (Pls. 63, 64), is a droll creation. He sits relaxed on two quarrelling dwarfs. One is shown pulling vigorously the hair of the other. The way the dwarfs' legs interlock is very ingenious. Near them, a pert dog is barking with the paw in mid-air, another whimsical creation.

The groups carved in the Niches 19 and 20 are of later execution, probably early eighth century (Pl. 65). This date is based on style, the round modeling of the figures, the type of images, the structure of the thrones. Both groups show a Buddha attended by two monks, two Bodhisattvas, guarded by two Vajrapāṇi. The Buddhas are differently garbed and perform different *mudras* which are not easily identifiable since the hands are very damaged. The Bodhisattvas are basically similar, while the monks differ in the gestures. The placing of the two Vajrapāṇi back to back at the center where the two niches join is a device

seldom seen in Buddhist sculpture. The playful expression of the Bodhisattva in Niche 20, facing the audience and smiling, is also rarely encountered.

The Northern Cliff

This location is also very near the town of Bazhong, two and a half kilometers away, but in a totally rural area. Most of the cliff where the niches were carved was enclosed in a temple building now no longer sacred ground, but incorporated in a hamlet and functioning as a storage area for hay and grains (Pl. 66). At least thirty niches are available which can be ascribed to the beginning of High Tang, about 700. The majority is small sized, not higher nor wider than one meter, and less than one meter deep. The niche with a Buddha represented standing between Ānanda and a Bodhisattva is a good example of this kind (Pl. 67). There are also larger niches, about five of them, similar in size and arrangement to those already discussed in the Western Cliff. These are the Niches number 4, 10, 13, 14, once jewels of invention and execution, now battered and destroyed. The largest groups showed Buddha attended by monks. Bodhisattvas, donors, Heavenly Kings, and Vajrapāṇi, and protected by the Demi-gods of the Eight Classes. The ceiling and the curtained canopies of those niches were embellished by splendid flying *apsarases* (Pls. 68, 69). The reveals were imaginatively decorated with secular scenes. Namely, riders with their horses or camels, demure ladies, donors with their servants (Pls. 70, 71). The smaller groups consist of a Buddha with two monks, two Bodhisattvas and two Vajrapāṇi. The corner view of a vigorous Vajrapāṇi shown standing on a stylized rock cliff, above an heraldic lion (?) is an example of this smaller niche type (Pl. 72). For all the above niches, an early Tang date is feasible. In the same Northern Cliff, past the buildings, were carved a couple of beautiful niches of later execution, probably 750 (Pl. 73). They are high up on the cliff, not reachable by man, only by the tallest bamboo imaginable.

Shuiningsi, The Shuining Temple

Shuiningsi is located about 35 kilometers southeast of Bazhong, in a village called Qingjiangxiang [93]. In spite of its name, Shuining Temple, there is no religious building at the site, but there are nine niches with sculpture. This sculpture has miraculously survived man-made and nature's destruction and is for the most part intact. No inscription with a date is available at the site, nor does the county chronicle supply information regarding this pious and beautiful work. On the basis of style and the parallel production at the Southern Cliff, the sculpture can be ascribed to the first half of the eighth century, no later than 750, the product of High Tang. The niches are of modest size; they were carved in the red sandstone cliff about five meters above

ground. Some can be reached by climbing over the cliff, for instance number 3, but most of them could be studied only from below. All the niches are here presented, focusing in particular on numbers 2, 3, and 8.

Niche number 1 is 1.98 meter high, 1.78 meter wide, and 0.70 meter deep (Pl. 74). Its iconography consists of a standing Buddha, perhaps Kṣitigarbha (Tizang), since he wears a monastic robe, holds a bowl and a staff. The attendant Bodhisattvas are Avalokiteśvara portrayed holding a bottle and a willow spray and Mahāsthāmapraptā. They are guarded by two Vajrapāṇi. Two *apsarases* are shown flying along the frame of the niche. I was told that below this niche there are two fragments of inscriptions, but without a date or donor's name.

Niche number 2 is of squarish shape (height 2.17 meters, width 1.81 meters, depth 1.46 meters) (Pl. 75). The Buddha, probably Śākyamuni, sits at the center of the rear wall, flanked on either side by a symmetrical arrangement of images. Thus on the (viewer's) left are placed Ānanda, a Bodhisattva, a female donor keeping her hands modestly in her sleeves, and a Heavenly King resting on a sword. Outside the niche, the group is joined by a Vajrapāṇi. On the opposite side, there is Kāśyapa as pendent of Ānanda; also the female donor holds a container, and the guardian holds a spear. On the ceiling, two *apsarases* are carved in low relief in the act of converging towards Buddha. In the right reveal, the contraposition of types, the Vajrapāṇi and the Heavenly King, is very vivid (Pl. 76).

Niche number 3 is the most beautiful at the site. Its height is 2.82 meters, width 1.65 meters, depth 1.05 meters. A ledge about half a meter deep runs in front of the niche, acting as an entrance. The niche displays a group of two Buddhas attended by two Bodhisattvas, ten disciples, two Vajrapāṇi and two *apsarases*. Two young children are also included in the audience (Pl. 77). The iconography raises some questions concerning the identity of the two main Buddhas. They do not necessarily portray the famous episode from the *Lotus Sūtra*, the joint appearance of Śākyamuni and Prabhutaratna in the *stūpa* which miraculously alighted in the sky. Perhaps they represent the Buddha of the Present, Śākyamuni, and that of the Future, Maitreya, who in his final incarnation will closely follow on the steps of his predecessor. The two Buddhas are carefully characterized and differentiated. Their postures, gesture, appearance, and garments all vary. They sit side by side, but on different thrones: one on a lotus throne, the other on a square throne with an attached lotus base to support the feet. There is an unusual arrangement of figures: between these two Buddhas is placed a Bodhisattva portrayed in the act of looking straight across to the audience (Pl. 78). The centrality of the group is stressed by the unusual interplay of circular shapes, the mandorlas and pointed halos. These three images are most serene and expressive, soft and oval, splendid interpretations of the High Tang style. The ten monks portray as well different types: young, old, stern and serene (Pls. 79, 80). They are

placed in overlapping planes, creating astonishing effect of animation. Their faces eagerly look out, they participate in the human world, they are not lost in a sacred dream. This religious representation expresses a deep feeling of empathy. The tender presence of the children, one of them clinging to the monk's robe, places the scene on a very human ground. The interplay of sacred and secular is undeniable, a trait often found in the art of Sichuan. Because of the human warmth carried by the representation, the onlooker is drawn to it, is accepted himself as part of that audience. Aside from the special emotional content, there is the beauty of the carving, the excellence of its skill visible not only in the images, but also in the scheme of decoration. The ceiling with its sumptuous decor of floral patterns and jewelled drapes (Pl. 81), acts as a baldaquin for the holy group. The scroll of honeysuckle which lusciously creeps all along the niche's frame is an indisputable reference to the best floral borders of stele works produced in Changan.

Niche number 4 is rather small (height 1.22 meter, width 1.05 meters, depth 0.65 meter). Its iconography is simple: a Buddha shown seated in Western pose assisted by a monk and a female donor, and guarded by two Heavenly Kings in full armor. In the pedestal of the throne are carved two niches in which are shown the donors with their children, five in all.

Niche number 5 has approximately the same dimensions as those of the preceding niche, but it displays thirteen images. They are a Buddha with six monks, two Bodhisattvas, two Heavenly Guardians, and two Vajrapāṇi. The images are weathered and have lost the original crispness.

Niche number 6 is also small (height 1.21 meters, length 1 meter, depth 0.85 meter), but has a large group of thirteen images. The iconography is very interesting since it represents a Buddha preaching to an audience of ten Bodhisattvas, five on each side. The Bodhisattvas are portrayed in different manners. In late Tang and Sung, in several sites of central Sichuan, Dazu and Anyüe, there are similar representations derived from the *Huayen Sūtra* [94], in which the central Buddha is Vairocana. At the Shuiningsi, however, the group may generically portray a paradise scene. Two Vajrapāṇi are also part of the audience. Niche number 7 is small and very damaged. In it there are a Buddha, two monks, two Bodhisattvas and two Vajrapāṇi.

The Niches number 8 and 9 are placed almost side by side and are related iconographically, but not in style. Whereas number 8 is fairly intact, number 9 has been severely damaged, since its floor caved in and many of the images are lost. Niche number 8 is 2.05 meters high, 2.10 meters wide, and 1.08 meters deep. It displays the most complex arrangement and most opulent decor at the site. The style seems also to differ from that of the preceding niches; perhaps it was executed by another carver. The arrangement of the group is quite unconventional and reaches a theatrical effect. Including the two *apsarases* on the ceiling (Pls. 82, 83) there are altogether twenty-one images. They are placed to form as many as three tiers, achieving a very dynamic effect. Buddha

sits under a baldaquin on a lotus throne whose base displays an intricate filigree scroll. A lion squatting on its haunches guards the throne, while two divine female offerers kneel on each side. The throne is enclosed by two jewelled trees whose branches spread over the ceiling (Pl. 84). As previously noticed, Sichuan Buddhism often approached and developed iconographic themes which the northern provinces completely neglected. This is the case of the Demi-gods of the Eight Classes. Those of Niche 8 are among the best preserved in the province (Pls. 85, 86). The Heavenly Being or Deva, the God of Water or Nāga, the God of Earth or Yakṣa, the minstrel of Heaven or Gandharva, the rebellious demon or Asura, the bird-like Spirit or Garuda, the spirit of Song or Kinnara, and the earth serpents or Mahoraga are all vividly portrayed wearing extravagant headdresses, holding special implements, exhibiting different kinds of emotions. This is a wonderful subject matter which must have particularly appealed to the Sichuanese carver since he could lavish in the execution of these personages his ability to contrast types, to imbue them with human emotions, to use caricature and humour. Thus while the Buddha sits serenely, the attendant monks and Bodhisattvas stand extremely calm, most of the other images, in striking contrast, are prey to the greatest turmoil. The tendency to secularize is particularly evident in the unusual depiction of the Heavenly King, at the left, holding a bow; perhaps, this guardian portrays a member of the local gentry (Pl. 86).

The Niches 1, 2, 3, 6, and 9 seem all executed by the same carver; the style is the same. Among them, number 3 is the most accomplished and best kept. The smaller caves 4, 5, 7 whose iconography is also fairly simple appear to have been done by another hand. Niche 8 stands apart; it is the product of a very skilled artist. In my opinion, they all belong to High Tang.

CENTRAL SICHUAN ANYÜE COUNTY

This county, once called Puzhou [95], occupied a very important geographical position during Tang, since it was placed on the Yü Dao [96], the road linking Ba [97], modern Chongqing, to Chengdu. It had, furthermore, access to northern Sichuan by the road which arrives at Bazhong by way of Lezhi [98] and Suining [99]. Anyüe County [100] offers a wealth of Buddhist art. Copious remains have been found in thirteen sites surveyed jointly since 1982 by the Anyüe and Dazhu Cultural Relics Bureaus. More sites are available, but have not been studied yet. The sculpture of this county belongs, for the most part, to the Tang and Song dynasties, but there is also textual evidence which records the existence of Buddhist art in Anyüe as early as the Northern Zhou Dynasty.⁴⁸ Only one of the sites is introduced here.

The Nirvāṇa Gully at Bamiaoxiang

Bamiaoxiang [101] is located forty kilometers northwest of the town of Anyüe. Travelling by boat along the Tongxian River [102] (which flows to Suining), one arrives at this remote village. The site is built around a gully, enclosed by two low cliffs, about fifty meters high. They stretch 400 meters in length; the width between the two cliffs is about one hundred meters. The Nirvāṇa was carved on the northern cliff. Opposite to it, on the southern cliff, fifteen chambers and additional niches were hewn in the rock. The fifteen chambers are extremely important because their walls are covered with the text of many *sūtras*. At this site, besides the Nirvāṇa, there are 125 niches with sculpture distributed on the northern and southern cliffs. Among them, forty on the south side are of large size, similar to small chambers. The latest survey counted a total of 1593 images.⁴⁹

The Nirvāṇa scene consists of two parts which illustrate two different events in time: Buddha Śākyamuni preaching to his followers and his subsequent final release (Pl. 87). Śākyamuni is portrayed twice, outstretched and seated among his disciples, Bodhisattvas, Vajrapāṇi, and the Demi-gods of the Eight Classes (Pl. 88). All of them except Buddha, are carved from the waist up (about 2 meters high), while Śākyamuni is fully carved (2.30 meters high) and is shown seated on a lotus. As he lies in Nirvāṇa, Śākyamuni is mourned by his youngest disciple, Ānanda, at his side (Pl. 89), and is guarded by a Vajrapāṇi, standing near his feet (Pl. 90). The monumental image is 23 meters long and 3 meters at its widest point; Ānanda is 3.4 meters high. Buddha's head is placed in the East and he lies on his left side, disregarding the canonical position on the right. Perhaps the quality of the stone, or the space available determined

this choice. Hu Wenhe [103] believes that this placement reflects the Chinese burial custom by which the head of the deceased lies in the East, the feet in the West.

The entire composition differs radically from the examples of northern China, such as the famous representation of Cave 148 at Dunhuang, close in time to the Anyue Nirvāṇa. It differs also from earlier Tang examples, such as the Nirvāṇa carved in the stele found at Ishixian [104], Shanxi, dated 692 and perhaps sponsored by Empress Wu.⁵⁰ In fact, this Nirvāṇa is unique in its interpretation of the events described in the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra*.

The two scenes may be explained in two ways. The upper gathering may allude to the last preaching of Buddha, described in chapter one of the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra*, in which the audience crowds around him with great emotion, having heard of his imminent Nirvāṇa. The representation below, in which a personage sits by the recumbent Śākyamuni, could refer to one of the events narrated in Chapter Forty of the same *sūtra*.⁵¹ Namely, the arrival of Subhadra – the last convert – his admission to Buddha's presence and his acceptance in the order. But Subhadra is described in the text as an old man, one hundred and twenty years old, while the personage represented here is quite young-looking.

Another identification is offered, based on the same chapter forty, which tightly knits together upper and lower scenes. The disciples, aware of Buddha's final release, pressed him to recognize one of them as his spiritual successor, but they feared that Ānanda would be chosen. Ānanda was kept away from Buddha for a time, but in the end the disciples conceded to Buddha's request that Ānanda be admitted to his presence. In the lower scene, thus, we see Ānanda by Śākyamuni's side clutching his teacher's hand with devotion. Above them, all the other disciples, the Bodhisattvas, the Demi-gods of the Eight Classes, and the Vajrapāṇi, as described in the sacred text, stand witness.

It is interesting that the key figure of Ānanda does not appear among the monks in the upper scene, where only nine were carved. His absence lends support to the second interpretation. The unprecedented placing of Ānanda alongside his teacher – a place usually reserved to Queen Māyā or, in Gandharan art, to Subhadra – discloses the creativity of the carver and his independence from established formulas. Ānanda's hand clasping that of Buddha effectively discloses the special bond which linked them; it is an emotional gesture charged with human meaning. The standing Vajrapāṇi is also given an unusual interpretation. In the northern representations of the Parinirvāṇa, two Vajrapāṇi are symmetrically placed in the scene and are shown in wrathful attitudes. In this example, instead, one Vajrapāṇi is placed behind Buddha's head (only the torso is shown) and is part of the upper scene (Pl. 91). The other Vajrapāṇi, an integral part of the lower scene, is carved in the round at Buddha's feet. Curiously, it is not his anger which is stressed, but rather his sorrow. Quite a reversal of his traditional role. The type of Buddha

portrayed is also unusual; his body is gaunt and linear. The pleats of his robe are abstractly arched patterns repeated all over the outstretched body.

The date for this monumental sculpture can be reached on the basis of the epigraphic evidence carved in the caves opposite the Parinirvāṇa. In these caves, excerpts from different *sūtras*, but especially from the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra*, were carved on the walls.⁵² Sometimes, interpolated with the text, there are references to the time of the text carving or the benefactor who made the carving possible or to the visitors.

In Cave 46, for instance, there are two such references occurring in the text of the *Fo ding zun sheng duoloni jing* [105].⁵³ Both are fragmentary. One alludes to a “Nirvāṇa Chapel”; the other mentions the date twenty-first year of Kaiyüan (733). In Cave 59 the evidence consists of two records both dated the twenty-third year of Kaiyüan (735). One commemorates the visit of a certain Li from Chang Jiangxian (during Tang it belonged to Suizhou, nowadays to Suining), who came to bring offerings [106]; the other record merely mentions a benefactress. This cave displays beautiful border decorations all around the text. They consist of the animals of the Zodiac in the dado, of palmettes and floral scrolls enclosing miniature Buddhas in the lateral friezes, and of flying apsaras in the borders where the walls join the ceiling. In style, they are very similar to the High Tang decorative motifs executed in Changan, in the first half of the eighth century.

In Cave 66 there is the reference “The monk Sheng Yi of Anyüexian, Puzhou, had the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra* carved in this cave as a perpetual offering [107].”

In Cave 73 there is the inscription that excerpts from the *Tan san Zang jing* were carved there the first year of Kaiyüan [108] (727).

Several of the above inscriptions indicate that the Kaiyüan period (713-42) was the time of most intense carving and copying of the *sūtra* texts at the site. It is, thus, quite possible that the Parinirvāṇa Buddha was also executed at that time. The Nirvāṇa Gully, with its monumental group and the carving of sacred texts, appears to be an act of devotion celebrating the teaching of the Nirvāṇa School, since the *sūtra* most frequently carved on the walls of the caves is the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra* (in Caves 46, 51, 59, 66). There is obviously, a deliberate linking of the monumental sculpture to its textual source. Furthermore, it is worth noting that several of the texts copied belong to *sūtras* grouped in the category of the Nirvāṇa teaching. In stressing this sacred text, the clergy of Anyüe was perhaps intentionally reaffirming its past ties with the Southern Buddhist tradition of coastal China where the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra* had been especially studied and venerated.⁵⁴

Aside from the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra*, the type of sacred texts carved in the caves supports the idea that the sculpture of this site was executed in the first half of the eighth century, during the Kaiyüan period. For the most part, these *sūtras* were the ones favored during the Northern and Southern Dynasties period,

particularly Kumarajiva's translations of the *Lotus Sūtra*, the *Vimalakīrti Nirdeśa Sūtra*, the *Amitābha Sūtra*, the *Vajra Pāramita Sūtra*, and the *Fo shuo chanmi yao jing* [109]. These were all works embodying the basic tenets of early Mahāyāna teaching.

A few *sūtras* popular during early Tang were also copied, such as the aforementioned *Fo ding zun shen duoloni jing* (683 translation), and the *Da fangbian Fo baoen jing* [110].⁵⁵ However, the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* translated by Śikṣānanda at Empress Wu's request, and the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*, the foundation of Chan Buddhism, by the same translator, are both conspicuously absent. The Yogācāra texts, which Xüanzang brought back from China and translated were not copied either. Xüanzang's translations are only represented by the *Panruoboloniduo xin jing* [111] (*Sūtra of the Heart Prajñā*), translated in 649. In conclusion, the *sūtras* carved most often were those presenting the main trends of Exoteric Buddhism, which were included in the *Kaiyüan shijiaolu* [112], Catalogue of Buddhist Teaching [compiled] in the Kaiyüan Era, by Zhisheng [113], completed in 730.

In the caves where the *sūtras* were carved there are also a few sculptures. Among them there is a beautifully carved Eleven-headed Guanyin with thousand hands belonging to the beginning of the eighth century (Pl. 92). It is one of the earliest examples of this iconography still extant. It is most regrettable that it has incurred such terrible damage, the heads in particular. Two of the six major arms have also been destroyed. The image, about 1.50 meters high, stands supple and elegant against the immense aureole formed by the thousand opened hands incised on the surface of the wall. Two of the major hands still hold *cintamāṇi* jewels. At Guanyin's feet, there are two minuscule suppliants, in Sichuan, they are usually associated with the Bodhisattva. Their presence will be discussed later.

SOUTHERN SICHUAN JIAJIANG

The Thousand Buddhas Cliff

The Thousand Buddhas Cliff is located along the northern bank of the Qing Yi River [114], a few kilometers southwest of the town of Jiajiang. The 1981 survey counted 162 niches with a total of 2470 images, which survived the destruction of the Cultural Revolution when the cliff was quarried to build the nearby road. At this site, the average niche measures one meter in width and 2.50 meters in height; the largest niche, number 135, is four square meters, a perfect square. The inscriptions available correspond to the early eighth century, especially to the Kaiyüan era, but the majority seems associated with the ninth century. For instance, Niche 63 is dated the twenty-first year of Dazhong [115] (867), the Niche 62 is dated the thirteen year of Dazhong (859), and the Niche 78 the eleventh year of Dali [116] (876). Additional inscriptions were carved in the Huichang (841-47) and Xiantong (860-74) eras.⁵⁶

The iconographic developments seem also to indicate a prevailing Middle and Late Tang activity at the site. The representations which occur most often are those of Vaiśravaṇa (especially the Khotanese type), of several manifestations of Guanyin, of Amitābha's Pure Land, and of the heavenly assemblies derived from the *Avatamsaka Sūtra*. There are also some unique interpretations of Kṣitigarbha (Tizang) [117], and of divine groupings not encountered elsewhere.

All the sculptures at Jiajiang bear only traces of their original painting. The intensely red sandstone has become eroded and the carving has lost its former crispness.

Niche 135, the most known and largest at the site, displays a representation of the Buddha Maitreya (2 meters high) flanked by two standing Bodhisattvas (Pls. 93, 94). Two stylized clouds enclosing small seated Buddhas float on each side of the main image. Small images are also carved alongside the border of the niche. Maitreya is shown seated on a rectangular dais; his feet are resting on two lotuses. Maitreya's hands are placed on his knees, one with the palm up, the other with the palm down. The Buddha sits against the huge double mandorla and halo whose outer border consists of flames. The same pattern is used for the Bodhisattva's halo. The roundness and softness of the modeling indicate that the images were most likely carved during the Kaiyüan era.

This hypothesis is supported by the fact that the Jiajiang Maitreya served in all likelihood as a model for the monumental Maitreya (70 meters high) carved in Leshan at the confluence of the Min and Dadu Rivers [118] (Pl. 95). The execution of the Leshan Maitreya is historically documented as having been

started the eighteenth year of Kaiyüan (730) by the monk Hai Tong [119] and completed in 803 through the sponsorship of Governor Feng Gao [120].⁵⁷ The face of the Leshan Buddha has been recut and has lost the original Tang roundness. The Jiajiang Buddha also became the model of another monumental image, the Buddha at Rongxian [121], ascribed to Song. The latter was enclosed in a wooden temple and is better preserved (Pls. 96, 97).

Niche 84 displays a sumptuously ornate Thousand-hands Guanyin (pl. 98). The two major arms of the Bodhisattva are joined in front of the chest in the attitude of prayer; forty, at least, additional arms form a huge aureole behind the deity. Every one of them is individually characterized; each hand holds a different implement. Many more life-size hands were incised on the surface of the wall to form two concentric rows similar to an additional huge halo which envelops Guanyin. Smaller attendants, monks and beatific beings are placed in the superimposed tiers which crowd the sides of the niche. Some are carved in low relief, others in high relief.

I have pointed out elsewhere that certain iconographic aspects which were ignored in other regions of China, were instead stressed and developed in Sichuan. This is the case with the figures of the suppliants portrayed at the feet of the deity (Pl. 99). At the left of Guanyin is carved an old and bearded personage, wearing pantaloons. He shields his eyes with his hand while looking up at the Bodhisattva. He is the Rishi Vasu. Behind Vasu, placed on a lower level is an emaciated being who raises his spindly hand to Guanyin as if begging. On the opposite side, a female is shown in the same attitude. They are either two *pretas* or a male *preta* and a beggar. Vasu and the pair of suppliants are part of the canonical entourage of the Thousand-hands Guanyin.⁵⁸

Niche 34 (?) offers yet another version of a Thousand-hand Guanyin (Pl. 100). This image has eleven heads, now all destroyed, but which were still extant when Ségalen photographed it. This sculpture is related to a similar image of the Five Dynasties period in Niche 273 at Beishan [122], Dazu, but the latter has only one head. In both examples, at Guanyin's sides are placed two *yakṣas* one holding a bag, the other some kind of offering. They are also two members of the Bodhisattva's retinue, Biloule and Biloubo [123].⁵⁹

In the Niches 5 and 6 two pairs of standing Guanyin are represented (Pls. 101, 102). These sculptures are very worn. The carver executed each one differently: their dresses, jewelry, headdresses, as well as the implements carried are all varied. The huge, openwork mandorlas adorning the images in Niche 5 are far more elaborate in the flame decor than those of Niche 6 which seem unfinished.

Niche 136 shows a standing Vaiśravaṇa of the type connected with the Kingdom of Khotan, called Douba Bishamen [124] (Pl. 103). This iconographic type was often represented at Dunhuang painted and also fashioned in clay, in the second half of the Tang.⁶⁰ At the sites previously discussed, at Bazhong in particular, it was not this Khotanese type, but the

traditional Vaiśravaṇa icon which was favored, shown trampling on a brutish figure and holding the *stūpa* (Pl. 44). The Khotanese heavenly guardian is shown frontally, standing firmly on the image of Mother Earth which supports both his feet. Two *yakṣas* are placed on each side. Stylized floating clouds serve as a pedestal for the group. The image wears a tall crown with ribbons (usually a bird adorns it, but in this case, it is hard to recognize it), breastplates, and a long tunic over a pleated undergarment. Long ribbons tied at the waist form decorative patterns as they are blown in the air. A horn is hanging from his belt. Both forearms of the deity are, unfortunately, broken; the *stūpa* is, thus, lost. At the site, at least one more example of this iconography is available (Pl. 105). At Leshan, the carver portrayed a different kind of Heavenly Guardian next to the monumental Maitreya. It is a king shown in a defiant posture wearing a tall Phrygian hat (Pl. 104).

Niche 91 displays a most unusual and novel iconography in which a central image (headless) is represented with four attendants (Pl. 106). The central figure wears a monastic garment and is shown seated on a square Sumeru throne. In the background, Ānanda and Kāśyapa are recognizable. The other two personages, also represented seated on oval thrones, in relaxed poses (with one leg folded, the other hanging), are striking for their unconventionality. Their identity is enigmatic. The figure at the left (viewer's) is clad in a secular robe with wide lapels; he appears troubled by sorrow or dismay since his toothless mouth is wide open. Is he crying or shouting aloud? The other personage, his head covered by a cowled hood, is, in contrast, very stern. Tentatively, I suggest that the group may represent the Bodhisattva Tizang flanked by two of his manifestations, a layman and a *śrāvaka* as described in *The Great Expansive Sūtra of the Ten Wheels* [125].⁶¹ Mountainous surroundings constitute the niche's background.

The following representations are Pure Land assemblies. Iconographically they are not all alike. The identity of some of them is, moreover, puzzling. In all cases, the interpretation is novel. Because of their complexity and sheer number of participants, these tableaux may derive from paintings. Many of them represent the Paradise of Amitābha and are an excellent indication of the tremendous growth of this cult in the second part of Tang.⁶²

Niche 99 represents without doubt the Pure Land of Amitābha (Pl. 107). In its pristine state, this must have been a masterful depiction. Amitābha and his two assistant Bodhisattvas, Avalokiteśvara and Mahāsthāmapraptā, are shown in majesty, seated on elaborate thrones, under suspended baldachins against a palatial setting. From their loggias and galleries, the blessed lean out in wonderment, partaking of the divine presence below. Streams of clouds issue from the central baldachin; they form loops in which miniature Buddhas are enclosed. On each side, the group is framed by two seven-tiered pagodas. Elegant birds have alighted at their bases. Two structures, perhaps *dharaṇi* pillars, enclosed the main image. The pond where the souls experience rebirth

is carved below the triad. The souls are barely visible. The plinth of the niche displays a lovely scene of an orchestra playing for two performing dancers while the spectators are all crowded in the left corner.

In style and composition, this scene is related to the Amitābha paradise carved in the cliff adjacent to the Maitreya at Leshan (Pl. 108). The Leshan example displays also its own eccentricities. For instance, the main image is seated on a throne supported by peacocks, while two kneeling offerers stretch their hands to touch the throne's lotus petals.

The heavenly group illustrated in Plate 109 (no niche number available) is quite difficult to identify. Although at first sight it seems to share similarities with the preceding representations of Amitābha, it is not a Western paradise. The sacred group is arranged in a semi-circle. Its central Buddha holds in his right hand either a rod ending in a lotus or a stalk, in his left a bowl. He is assisted on each side by two Bodhisattvas seated in the royal pose of ease. Each one of the images is set against a large flaming mandorla. Their thrones are adorned with beautifully carved, naturalistic lotus blossoms. The participants are few, portrayed on small scale, and distributed in three superimposed tiers. At the level of the throne's base eight images, similar to guardians, are carved (only five are visible in the photo). Are they representations of heavenly generals? Two monks flank the main Buddha. Above them are represented four donors, two males and two females, all shown converging towards the mandorla of the Buddha. The rows of supplementary Bodhisattvas, four in all, are placed at the sides. Two Vajrapāṇi, quite ruined, stand guard outside the niche. Could the scene represent the assembly of Bhaiṣajyaguru, the Buddha of Healing? Canonically, Bhaiṣajyaguru is assisted by ten generals.

The large assembly of Niche 4 represents the "Three Venerables of Huayen", that is, Vairocana flanked by Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra and assisted by the ten disciples; the two disciples on each side are not completely visible in the photo (Pl. 110). The animal on which Samantabhadra is seated curiously displays the fan-shaped ears of an elephant, but the body of a lion. Two Vajrapāṇi stood once at the entrance of the niche; now only one is barely visible.

This iconographic group became very popular in central and southern Sichuan during the ninth century. Its imagery derives from the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* (Huayenjing) [126], where the two Bodhisattvas figure prominently in the last part of the text (the Gandavyūha), which describes the spiritual journey of Sudhana.⁶³

In Niche 20 at Jiajiang, perhaps the same iconography is interpreted differently (Pl. 111). In Vairocana's assembly a prominent place is given to the two seated Bodhisattvas while Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra on the lion and the elephant (barely visible in the corners) play a lesser role. All the heavenly beings and the blessed surround the triad on every side like an exceedingly large choir.

The paradise group represented in Niche 14 is difficult to identify. It is an isolated occurrence and its imagery is puzzling. The group consists of four main Buddhas, two of them portrayed seated and two standing (one of the latter is no longer extant) (Pls. 112, 113, 114). Māñjuśrī and Samantabhadra are placed in the corners of the niche. All the images, to my recollection, are about 1.25 meters high. The six deities have been given very large, pointed mandorlas embellished by a flame motif. But the mandorla of the Buddha shown seated in the Western pose differs from the others'. It is larger and encompasses both the deity and its throne. Spikes and volutes decorate this mandorla. Perhaps even two dragons are carved at its pinnacle. The throne has a most elaborate, tall back adorned with multiple elements. Atlantes hold up rampant leogryphes mounted by sprite creatures; crocodilian masks or *makaras*, protrude from each corner of the backslab; they support long-necked birds. The construction and decor of this unusual throne seem inspired by an Indian model of the late Gupta-early Pāla period (approximately 600 to 800). Some of the bronzes found at Nālandā, Bihar, could be the source of this richly ornamented seat.⁶⁴

Behind the six deities there is a throng of lesser images, the audience. The arrangement is particularly crowded at the left (viewer's), behind the standing Buddha (Pl. 114). There, the six-armed Asura is visible, placed higher than all the others. Perhaps the remaining Demi-gods of the Eight Classes are also included. Access to the niche is possible by means of two tall steps serving as a plinth; each one shows rows of representations. The lowest, which is very battered, displays a band of musicians, the upper a group of ten seated Buddhas (all without heads). Perhaps they represent the Buddhas of the Ten Directions. The four main Buddhas in the niche may depict the Buddhas of the Four Directions: Akṣobhya (East), Amitāyus (West), Maitreya (North?), and Śākyamuni (South?). The Buddha Maitreya is perhaps the one shown seated on the elaborate throne, but why would Maitreya be given a position of honor in the quartet? Akṣobhya (now destroyed) would have been on Maitreya's right, Amitāyus on his left, an hypothesis which appears confirmed by the Buddha's *mudrā* of contemplation. Śākyamuni should be the one standing, protected by the Asura.

On the basis of the material introduced in this section, the following remarks are submitted. The carving at Jiajiang is linked to and at least some of the images served as models for the sculpture of Leshan and Rongxian. In these two counties there are several sites of Tang sculpture which have not yet been surveyed nor published.

New iconographic themes are displayed at Jiajiang. They are likely the product of the ninth century. Some are also present at Beishan, Dazu where they are firmly dated Late Tang. The new themes introduce in a grandiose manner the intricacies of the Western Paradise, the Esoteric representation of the Thousand-hands Guanyin, the Summa Majestas of the Huayen, and the

visual synthesis of the directional Buddhas and their adorers. All these representations, because of their inherent complexity and sheer number of participants, were more easily painted than carved. The painted versions are, however, lost. In northern China, no sculpture of these complex iconographic themes is available, but in Sichuan the carver met the challenge of committing them to stone and succeeded.

QIONGLAI

In Qionglai County [127], which is situated 100 kilometers southwest from Chengdu, there are several Buddhist sites. I visited the one at Shisunshan [128] (Stone Bamboo Shoots Mountain).⁶⁵ This location is thirty kilometers northwest of Qionglai, mid-way between the counties of Qionglai and Dayi [129]. At Shisunshan there are thirty-three niches of various sizes, two of them monumental. The niches were carved on two levels of the cliff. Some of the niches of the upper level are visible in the photo (Pl. 115). Below the cliff there are some scattered farmhouses in the middle of fields and rice paddies. There is no public road, but a small path winds its way uphill to the caves. All thirty-three niches are numbered; most of them have suffered damage, inflicted by man or by the elements. The two largest niches are number 14, with a representation of Maitreya, 7.50 meters high, surrounded by a large group of attendants, and number 32, which shows the "Three Venerables of the Huayen", Vairocana with Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra, two Vajrapāṇi and two Heavenly Kings. These two niches are not presented in this study.

Some of the groups carved in the other niches are fairly simple, consisting of a Buddha, two monks, two Bodhisattvas. In some cases, there are also two additional Vajrapāṇi. Other niches, in contrast, display very complex compositions, as if paintings had been transposed in the stone. In such groups, over one hundred images of different sizes were carved. A few examples of the latter type are introduced here.

At the site there are at least two inscriptions which were brought to my attention. One is dated the second year of Dali (767). The other is carved in a small niche below Niche 32 and reads "On the ninth day of the ninth month of the Gande era, the monk Sian visited this place" [131]. The era Gande most likely corresponds to the period 919-925, during the Later Shu Kingdom in Sichuan. The second year is 920. This inscription may imply that by the early tenth century, devotees were coming to visit this already well-developed site. Because of similar iconographic and stylistic developments at Beishan, Dazu, where the epigraphic evidence is incontrovertible, the sculpture of Qionglai can be judged to have been executed in the ninth century, from Middle to Late Tang. The interpretations of famous iconographic themes at this site are not only unusual, but also startlingly tinted by secularism. At times, the realism of the details places the subject matter in a very profane context.

The meeting of Mañjuśrī and Vimalakīrti is depicted in Niche number 20, a rather shallow rectangular niche (height 3.1 meters, length 2.1 meters, depth 0.80 meter) (Pl. 116). In spite of the erosion which has disfigured the images, one still perceives the inventiveness which generated such a brilliant composition. On the rear wall, opposite the viewer, and alongside the two lateral walls, the key elements of the narrative are prominently displayed. We

behold the big gate of the city of Vaiśālī where the encounter took place and the spacious hall where the two seated personages are shown facing each other. Mañjuśrī sits under a baldaquin (Pl. 117), Vimalakīrti within an alcove. Worldly and divine guests are carved on the walls. They form rows of superimposed registers; those placed low are larger. There are musicians, male attendants and ladies in waiting, retainers, scholars, *bhikṣus*, and heavenly officials. Among the divine guests there are Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, accompanied by their retinues. There are unusual touches of realism in the way events are portrayed. We look on as the illustrious guests make their entrance. Their importance is skillfully suggested by the low bow of the attendant (Pl. 118). The crowd of the blessed standing along the walls is hushed. Deep reverence is felt in the air. Yet a paradoxical twist of the imagination prompted the carver to represent, on top of Vimalakīrti's baldaquin, a horse pursuing an elephant in a mad rush, an almost shrill note in an otherwise very still and dignified setting. In contrast, *apsarases* crown the gate and gravitate in mid-air. The amount of characterization applied in portraying the spectators is astonishing. Their heads and bodies are turned towards each other implying personal involvement. In their eagerness to participate, they seem to be standing on tip-toes. The divine realm is immersed in a secular setting here. It is a vivid and effective illustration of the principle proclaimed in the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra*, that to reach Enlightenment one does not necessarily have to forsake the ties to this world.

Niche number 3 is of relatively modest size (2.5 meters high, 2.45 meters long, and 1.75 meters deep) in relationship to the many images carved in it. The main image is a Thousand-hands Guanyin shown seated on a high throne, with legs tightly interlocked (Pl. 119).⁶⁶ It is, unfortunately, very eroded, the face especially; and many sets of the major arms are mutilated. Guanyin originally had twelve pairs of major hands holding different implements no longer identifiable (Pl. 120). One distinguishes a pair of hands lying on the lap and holding a bowl, two hands are joined in front of the chest, and another pair is placed above the deity's head supporting Amitabha Buddha. From Buddha's head emanate rays of light. They reach the ceiling like sinuous ribbons and meander over its surface. In the loops they form there are small seated Buddhas. A huge, perfectly round halo surrounds Guanyin. It is formed by the thousand outstretched arms and hands. Many images of the blessed, furthermore, crowd around the halo as if pushing each other. Some are only partially visible; one is a three-headed, six-armed Asura. (Pl. 121). The Bodhisattva's costume is very sumptuous. Heavy drapes swathe the body, spill over the dais of the throne and cascade to the ground. Ribbons and ropes of jewels are strewn over the cloth. When the sculpture possessed its original crispness, it displayed remarkable beauty and carving skills. At each side of Guanyin's throne, forming a semi-circle, were carved small scale Bodhisattvas, seated, in the act of adoration.

The grace and splendor of Guanyin stand in sharp contrast to the representations on the lateral walls which seem to evoke the thirty-three possible manifestations of the deity. As described in the *Lotus Sūtra*, in order to save the sentient beings in distress, Guanyin, according to the need of each given situation, may assume a different guise. Guanyin can appear in divine or human form. In the hand of the Sichuan artist, these manifestations became a vehicle for portraying very realistic images. They became most ingenious and imaginative creations. On the lateral walls, they occupy three registers. On either wall, the scenes are fairly symmetrical, although by no means identical. The left wall (viewer's) is the one available.

In the upper left corner, below the ceiling, a rider flies speedily through the air on a crane's back (Pl. 121). Similarly a horse gallops with his master, while the groom tries in vain to keep pace. The God of Thunder is also present enclosed in a circle of drums (Pl. 122). These fleeting scenes are shown enclosed in wisps of clouds. Their meaning is unclear to me. Still in the upper tier, next to the niche's frame, a double-roofed pavilion is partially carved. Under its eaves, two demonic creatures, probably *yakṣas*, gnashing their horrible fangs, are clasping each other's throats with their claws.

The scenes in the middle tier are of a mundane nature. Below the crane, courtly personages are portrayed. The most prominent is garbed in a wide-sleeved costume and is accompanied by young and old servants (Pl. 121). Below the spirited steed there are two groups. One consists of a monk tightly wrapped in his robe, placed next to a warrior in armor. The other group is especially unusual: a lady of substance and ample proportions accompanied by a couple of servants (Pl. 122). Among them is a female portrayed naked to the waist. The woman's swollen breasts and protruding abdomen clearly reveal her pregnancy. She also keeps her left hand on her belly as if to protect the unborn, in a profoundly human and natural gesture (Pl. 122). On the same level, below the two grappling *yakṣas* there is a warrior with a bow and arrow (Pl. 122). Two women's faces appear above his shoulders, while a child holds on to his garment. Many of the above representations are placed on stylized clouds, or are enclosed in clouds as if to stress their nature of transformations or apparitions.

The lowest tier's representations concentrate on martial images. Two of the four Heavenly Kings are represented here; the one shown holding the *stūpa* is definitely Vaiśravaṇa (Pl. 123). They are surrounded by gentle, young-looking attendants, and devilish ones lurking above their shoulders. A frightful *yakṣa* is portrayed biting into a python slung around his neck. Toward the frame of the niche there is a three-headed (?), six-armed, standing guardian figure (Pl. 124). He brandishes many implements of war – a hammer, a spear, an arrow. His neck is adorned with a chain of skulls and a coiled snake. Flames issue from his head. A maiden stands demurely in his shadow. At his feet kneels an anthropomorphic figure with a pig snout, a representation of Ganeśa.

This personage strongly resembles Mahākāla who is usually present in the retinue of the Thousand-hands Guanyin. This identification is reinforced by the presence of Ganeśa, although Mahākāla usually tramples on Ganeśa in the Tibetan interpretation of the theme.⁶⁷ If this identification is correct, in this niche, one sees the fusion of the Esoteric teaching – the Thousand-hands Guanyin – with earlier Exoteric elements – the thirty-three manifestations of Guanyin the Savior. Among the manifestations are Mahākāla and Ganeśa, originally Hindu deities, who became absorbed in Esoteric Buddhism. The Qionglai scene is thus an eclectic composition, showing the main deity at the very center of the tableau, in the same manner as the late and post-Tang Dunhuang banners do, but relying chiefly on Exoteric imagery for the representations on the lateral walls. This eclectic composition has no counterpart in painting or sculpture of the North during Tang or after and may be regarded as an exclusively Sichuanese creation.

Niche number 8, similar in size and state of preservation to the preceding number 3, interprets with slight variations the same iconography of the Thousand-hands Guanyin. In this niche, the deity is shown seated in the pose of royal ease, the left leg resting on a lotus, the right folded on the throne (Pls. 125, 126). The image was carved with the same body, with the same opulence and brilliance of trappings as the preceding. Among the personages representing Guanyin's transformations, the Vajrapāṇi depicted on the right (viewer's), at the entrance, is quite handsome (Pl. 127). The dynamic tension displayed in the pose, the linearism of the ribbons and winding scarves evoke a painted version of the same subject on the walls of a contemporary temple. In the niche's reveal is carved a standing Bodhisattva (Pl. 127).

Niches 4 and 6 offer two different interpretations of the Western Pure Land of Amitābha. They are a glorification and visual translation of the belief that those who invoke Amitābha during their lifetime or on their deathbed will be saved and allowed to share his paradise, regardless of how undeserving they have been. These most elaborate and intricate scenes, in which at least one hundred images of all sizes are carved, are of relatively modest size.

Niche 4 is 3.50 meters high, 3 meters wide, and 3 meters deep. The main triad in the upper level is placed under three distinct baldaquins. Those above the Bodhisattvas are shaped like pinecones (Pls. 128, 129). Above the triad, an aerial corridor spans the entire width of the rear wall and connects the buildings placed on the side walls. The lateral buildings are two tall towers linked by bridges at different levels (Pl. 130). The trees carved on the towers' roofs stretch their branches to the ceiling, conjuring up visions of pensile gardens. Wisps of clouds float in the void suggesting celestial breezes. In these clouds Buddhas are seated. There are throngs of blessed beings everywhere. They are shown walking from one belvedere to the next, climbing the staircases, and leaning on the balustrades. A child is depicted joyously sliding down the banister (Pl. 131). The upper and intermediate courts are also linked

by ramps or stairs; in the rear of the middle court, tall columns support the upper court by a complex system of brackets (Pl. 128). A bustling activity pervades every sphere of this celestial space. Heavenly groups, now badly eroded, each presided by a Buddha, were carved in the intermediate level. Perhaps they are interpretations of the several degrees of welcome.

The lowest level is a very shallow space. It was once occupied by minuscule seated images, probably the beatific souls. None of their former pristine crispness remains. This section is presided on each side by Mañjuśrī on the lion (viewer's left) and Samantabhadra on the elephant. The latter is better preserved (Pl. 132). The inclusion of the two deities in the two lower corners of the niche is found also at other sites in Sichuan, but the two are absent in the paintings of the Western Paradise at Dunhuang. Among the known examples of this iconography reputedly executed in northern China, only the Taima mandala displays Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra, but they are placed in the two upper corners of the composition.⁶⁸ At Qionglai, behind each Bodhisattva grows a most fantastic tree on whose blossoms the newly born souls are shown seated. This device is also a novelty in respect to the northern versions.

In the right reveal of the niche were carved niches of various sizes which are not part of a unified iconographic program (Pl. 133). A very tall Guanyin dominates two attendant Bodhisattvas; below this group, in another niche, two additional Guanyin were carved. The guardians proper of this Pure Land must have been the three Bodhisattvas carved on two levels, one above (now missing), the other two below (headless). They are depicted in a fleeting moment while deeply bowing with their knees flexed. The lotuses which support them are splendidly carved. The pendent images on the left side are now destroyed. On the left side there is a dragon stele with an undecipherable inscription.

In Cave number 6 another interpretation of the Western Pure Land was carved. The niche's dimensions are slightly different (height 3 meters, width 3.7 meters, depth 2.91 meters) from those of Niche number 4. The bold, daring conception of this scene reflects the imagination of a carver who was not bound by dogmatic rules. The three-leveled composition is maintained. In the upper court the triad is disposed in a semi-circle (Pl. 134). This movement is echoed by the architectural setting which recedes in space to form another round pattern. The tower behind Amitābha surpasses all the others in height; its elevation makes use of a triple bracket system. All the towers built against the lateral walls, as well as those leaning against the rear wall, are linked by covered passageways animated by the presence of many blessed. The towers next to the niche's frame are less ornate and of simpler structure (Pl. 135). In the intermediate court is the pool where the souls experience rebirth. In this section, in particular, the artist suited iconography to his inspiration, in a most unconventional fashion. At the center of the pool grows a sturdy lotus plant.

Its opulent leaves and blossoms cling to the wall and creep to the upper level, spreading out like a fan (Pl. 136).

In the holy pond, two boats of pleasure slowly and heavily make their way as they emerge from two tunnelled passages. These boats are quintessentially secular in their appearance and scope. The boats' bows are shaped like two monstrous carps. The boats have two decks. In the lower, the boatmen are shown rowing; in the upper, within round enclosures, carefree passengers of a higher class are amusing themselves and enjoying the ride. On the boat at the left (viewer's), a passenger can be seen standing astride to keep his equilibrium while the boat emerges into the open air (Pl. 137).

In the entire tableau, one is aware of a pervading exhilaration rather than of a beatific stillness. The blessed are seldom portrayed standing still. Some are shown hurriedly climbing the stairs to meet others, some lean from the belvederes as if looking for friends. The agitation is shared by the wisps of clouds carved below the ceiling in which miniature Buddhas are seated in contemplation of the bustling activity below (Pl. 135).

On the lowest court, behind Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra two lotus trees are carved (Pls. 137, 139). On their branches, instead of leaves, grow lotus thrones occupied by the souls portrayed at different stages of rebirth. The lotuses open gradually to allow the blessed beings to rise. Some are fully grown and voluptuously sway to the side. Others are still enveloped like chrysalides by the closed buds (Pl. 140).

The custodians of this paradise are appropriately, but not canonically, chosen from the sacred and secular worlds. They are two splendid Guanyin (Pls. 141, 142) and two rapturous dancers (Pls. 139, 143). Their opulent forms are tightly wrapped in swathes of cloth, although their midriffs are daringly exposed.

Ropes of pearls are tied below their knees, and wide jewelled scarves, in triple loops, hang from their moving arms. The profusion of cloth clinging to the image is sensuously revealing the body rather than hiding it. The dancers are shown performing an elaborate step as if they had swung into one position and were ready to initiate another. Yet the body is still turned to the Pure Land while the face (disfigured) looks ahead to the mundane world of the spectators. The dancers are standing on two splendidly carved lotuses whose florid contours match their own. The build of their bodies does not appear to be that of a Chinese woman, nor does the costume which provokingly bares part of the torso. Is the portrayal of these dancers influenced by the appearance of performers coming from lands south of Sichuan? In fact, in 802, the Nanzhao (Yunnan) and Pyu [215] (Burma) tribute missions to the Tang court in Chang'an sparked enormous interest by presenting troupes of dancers and musicians who performed dances and songs with Buddhist lyrics.⁶⁹ I suggest that the Qionglai carvers saw these exotic performers travelling through Sichuan on their way to the capital.

Niches number 4 and 6 were likely executed by different carvers motivated by different interests in their approach to the subject matter. In Niche 4, the architecture and its layout are pivotal to the composition; they are the backbone of the representation and forcefully hold together the various levels of the imagery. In Niche 6, the palatial structures are not as crucial to the carver as the bustling activity of the blessed which takes place in them. In this case, the wealth of narrative details completely absorbed the carver's interest and skill.

These three-dimensional Western paradises, together with those previously discussed of Jiajiang and Leshan and those of Beishan, Dazu (not discussed here), are evidence that this iconography was not confined merely to painting, but existed also in stone carvings. Numerous are the paradises painted at Dunhuang during Tang, but only in Sichuan are the corresponding sculptural versions still available.

In comparison to paintings, the relief of Qionglai do not incorporate the story of King Ajataśatru and the meditations of Queen Vaidehī.⁷⁰ Nor are the nine degrees of welcome extended by Amitābha to his devotees clearly characterized. The Qionglai sculptural versions, on the other hand, expand on the joyous activities of the blessed in heaven. In agreement with the paintings, the carvings maintain a clear division of the composition into sections. These sections, in the niche, are equivalent to the three levels in space: the court of the triad with the architectural setting, the middle level with the pond of rebirth, and the lowest presided by Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra. In the Dunhuang murals, in the lowest court the musicians and the performers are always found. They are, however, generally omitted in the reliefs. In comparison to the Amitābha's Pure Land representations carved at Jiajiang and Leshan, the Qionglai interpretations display a livelier narrative and a greater mastery in the execution of the architectural setting.

CONCLUSIONS

On the basis of the evidence introduced, the meaning of the article's title becomes apparent: in the province of Sichuan, not only lies a copious body of Tang cliff sculpture which has escaped our knowledge up to the present, but the early and rather limited photographic record published by Victor Ségalen at the beginning of this century have also fallen into oblivion. Western art historians erroneously considered this evidence a provincial and sporadic manifestation of Tang style.

The material here submitted, although abundant, is but a fraction of a much larger body which, I hope, will be published by the Chinese in the future and which Westerners, if fortunate, will also be allowed to study. The scope of this investigation has been to introduce the evidence in a general way. I am aware that the historical background of the sites discussed and several questions pertaining to novel aspects of iconography have not yet been fully explained. My intentions frankly are to move ahead with the publication of the material at hand and to share with other historians the labor of placing Sichuan sculpture in its proper perspective.

While studying this sculpture, I became aware that it displays intrinsic traits of style and iconography which are independent from northern Tang sculpture. Such independence rests on the long and well-established carving tradition in the province and it grows from the deep roots which Buddhism developed in Sichuan. Both of these phenomena date back to Han times. In iconography, Sichuan established its own unmistakable interpretations of sacred themes and scenes, as witnessed by the flamboyant rendering of the group of the Demi-gods of the Eight Classes and by the complex tableaux of Amitābha's Paradise. Sichuan's iconography, furthermore, appears to have played a very active role in transmitting such iconographies to Japan. Sichuan's openness and curiosity to the world around it, which stems from its mercantile society, imbued its art with realism and secularism.

Lastly and most important of all, this evidence considerably widens the category of Tang Buddhist art as we have known it up to the present. The wealth of Sichuan sculpture marked by exuberance and worldly realism – aspects which the sober North did not particularly pursue – cannot remain unknown nor should it be forgotten.

NOTES

1. Mizuno Seiichi, "Todai no Butsuzō chōkoku," *Bukkyō geijutsu*, "9 (October, 1959), pp. 3–43.
2. I would like here to acknowledge my gratitude to the National Endowment for the Humanities who supported my stay in China (September 1985–June 1986) with a fellowship administered by the Committee on Scholarly Communication with the People's Republic of China. I also wish to thank the Sichuan Academy of Arts [132], Chongqing, for the warm hospitality extended to my husband and myself during that period. In particular, I owe my gratitude to its Director, Ye Yūshan [133] and to the Professors Li Sisheng [134] and Wang Guanyi [135]. With Professor Wang, I visited several of the off limits sites introduced in this article. I also express my gratitude to the personnel of the Cultural Relics Bureaux of the following counties : Guangyūan, Bazhong, Anyūe, Leshan, Rongxian, Jiajiang, Qionglai. They provided hospitality and facilitated my investigation of the cliff sculpture. I am also grateful to Philip Evola who converted all my slides to photographs.
3. Victor Ségalen, Gilbert de Voisins, Jean Lartigue, *Mission archéologique en Chine (1914), L'art funéraire à l'époque du Han*, 3 vols., (Paris, 1935), pls. 92–128.
4. Victor Ségalen, *The Great Statuary of China* (Chicago and London, 1978), p. 119.
5. Tokiwa Daijio, Sekino Tadashi, *Shina bunka shiseki*, 12 vols., (Tokyo, 1939–41), vol. 10, pls. 1–4.
6. Wu Hung, "Buddhist Elements in Early Chinese Art," *Artibus Asiae*, vol. 47, 3/4 (1986), pp. 263–352; *Stories from China's Past, Han Dynasty Tomb Reliefs and Archaeological Objects from Sichuan Province, People's Republic of China*, Catalogue of Exhibit at the Chinese Cultural Center of San Francisco, (San Francisco, 1987), pp. 196–99
7. The cultural relationship between the Southern Liang, on the one hand, and the northern dynasties (Wei, Northern Zhou, and Northern Qi) on the other, was first explored by Alexander C. Soper, "South Chinese Influence on the Buddhist Art of the Six Dynasties Period," *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities*, no. 32 (1960), especially pp. 84, 92–94. The Wan Fo Ssu findings are now in part exhibited in the Sichuan Provincial Museum, Chengdu. They were published by Liu Zhiyūan, Liu Tingbi, *Chengdu Wan Fo Ssu* (Shanghai, 1958). The most recent study on this subject is by Matsubara Saburō, "Study on the Buddhist Sculptures During the Period of Southern Courts in China," *Ars Buddhica*, no. 130 (May, 1980), pp. 64–77.
8. For instance, the monk Dao Wang [136] lived during the Liu Song Dynasty (420–79). He was a native of Fujian and studied at Mount Lu. He was especially versed in the Nirvana teaching. With a few other monks, he set out for Liangzhou (northwest Sichuan). On the road they were assaulted by robbers, but were rescued by the miraculous intervention of Guanyin. As Wang was particularly interested in Chan, he decided to visit a reknown Chan Master in Hejian [137], Hebei, but was prevented from reaching his destination by the barbarians Tuyū [138]. He arrived, instead, to Chengdu where he settled for life. He was welcomed by most and acclaimed as a miracle-maker, although he had to overcome the initial hostility of the Prefect. It is particularly interesting to read in his biography that he was placed in charge of building a temple near some gorges – the text does not specify in which part of Sichuan. In addition, Dao Wang had images carved on the cliff. The location was chosen because a supernatural brilliance kept shining there during the night. He died the first year of Song Taishi [139] (465). See *Gaosengzhuan* [140], chapter 7, T. 50, no. 2059, pp. 371c–372a.

9. For this and the following historical information, I relied on Denis Twitchett, ed., *The Cambridge History of China*, vol. 3, (Cambridge, 1979). For the administrative division of Sichuan in Tang time, the roads of access and communication, I used Tang Qixiang, ed., *Zhongguo shi ditu* (Shanghai, 1975), vol. 5, pls. 65–66, 67–68. I was unable to consult Matsui Shuichi, “Tōdai zenpanki no Shisen,” *Shizaku zasshi*, (1962), pp. 1178–1214, which explores the historical situation of Sichuan during Tang. The complex relationship between Changan and the kindoms on its southern and western borders, namely Nanzhao in Yunnan and Tibet, has been investigated by Charles Backus, *The Nan-chao Kingdom and T'ang China's South-western Frontier* (Cambridge, 1981).
10. Hans Bielenstein, “The Census of China during the Period 2–742 A.D.,” *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities*, no. 19 (1947), pp. 125–63.
11. *The Cambridge History of China*, pp. 523–24, 612–13, 749–50.
12. Particularly supportive is the evidence found in the anthology of arts and letters in the Kingdom of Shu, collated during Ming (end of 15th-early 16th century) by Yang Shen [141], *Chuan Shu yiwenzhi* [142], 64 chüan. The entry in chapter 41 by Wen Tong, “Penzhou Zhangshi huaji [143],” relates that when the Tang Emperors, Xüan Zong and Xi Zong, fled to Shu, the court painters followed them there. As a result, soon the temples of Chengdu displayed paintings of Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, and Lohans as no other place in the realm. The passage continues describing in particular the skills of the painter Zhang. Max Loehr, *The Great Painters of China* (New York, 1980), pp. 79, 81, mentions the painter Wei Yan [144], perhaps active in the late seventh-early eighth century who left his native Changan to reside in Shu. Du Fu [145] refers to his work in one of his poems; the painter Sun Wei [146], a native of Chejiang, fled Changan with the Emperor Xi Zong, in 881 and settled in Shu where he probably remained until his death. In chapter one of the *Yizhou Minghualu* by Huang Xiufu [147], (1006), there are several references both to painters who went to Sichuan and to painters who were born there. For instance, Zhang Nanben [148], perhaps a refugee from Changan who lived in Yizhou from 881 to 884. He made for himself a reputation as a Buddhist painter, specializing in the terrifying images of the Ming Wang [149], such as the set of eight he executed for the Jinhuasi [150]. Among the native painters, the same source recalls Gao Daoxing [151] and Li Sheng [152] both active in the late ninth century. There is no doubt that the emigrés to Shu did not establish a school of painting, but joined one already existing.
13. Both Wuzetian and the princes of the imperial house are discussed in this paper under the headings of Guangyüan and Bazhong, respectively. In mid-eighth century there were also famous court officials who were born in Shu. For instance, Yang Guochong [153], a distant relative of Yang Guifei [154] who became Prime Minister in Changan, in 753. *The Cambridge History of China*, pp. 444 ff.
14. Liu Changjiu, Hu Wenhe, “Sichuan shike zaoxiang yishu gaishu,” *Shehui kexue yanjiu*, 6 (1985), pp. 68–73.
15. Wang Jiayu, “Anyüe shike yü Dazu Baoding shiku,” *Dazu shike yanjiu tongxun*, 2 (1986), pp. 32–35.
16. *The Cambridge Tang History*, p. 246. Present day Zetianxian [155], in Guangyüan County, is regarded as the Empress’ native place. Each year, on January 23d, her birthday is marked by festivities and she is venerated as a divine being by the common people.
17. Zhang Mingshan, Huang Chanyüe, “Sichuan Guangyüanxian Huangzesi tiaochaji,” *Kaogu* 7 (1960), pp. 53–56.
18. In the Ming gazetteer *Shuzhong mingshenji* by Zao Xüechuan [156] (1571–1646), the building of the temple is generically assigned to Tang. But the later Qing gazetteer *Guangyüanxianzhi* [157], in chapter

- thirteen, quotes a stela inscription of Ming time, the *Chen Hongen Huangzesi shushi peiji* [158] according to which the temple was built by the Empress who used to offer sacrifices in it. The same gazetteer, in chapter three, states that according to tradition, the temple was built by Wuzetian upon becoming Empress.
19. Those eight personages are mentioned in the most known, early Mahāyāna *sūtras*, several translated by Kumārajīva about 400. For instance, the *Lotus Sūtra*, the *Wuliangshoujing* [159], the *Da chengbensheng xindiguanjing* [160], the *Wenshushili wenjing* [161], the *Guangshiyin Pusa shoujijing* [162], the *Renwang huguo Banruojing* [163]. The eight demi-gods are always present in the audience which convenes to listen to Śākyamuni's preaching. Mochizuki Shinkō, *Bukkyō Daijiten*, 10 vols., (Tokyo, 1936), vol. 5, 4223–24.
 20. In the *Chusanzangiji* [164], chapter twelve, one reads that the Liu Song Emperor Ming [165] and the Southern Qi Imperial Princes Wen Huang and Wen Xūan [166] sponsored eight demon deities of the eight classes. Perhaps the Princes were responsible for the completion of the set. T. 55, no. 2145, p. 92 b, c. also in Alexander C. Soper, *Literary Evidence for Early Buddhist Art in China* (Ascona, 1959), p. 54.
 21. *Kaogu* 7 (1960), fig. 1.
 22. Shi Yan, "Guanyū Guanyūan Chien Foyan zaixiangde chuangshu shidai wenti," *Wenwu*, 2 (1961), p. 62.
 23. The text of the 715 Feng Kang's inscription is recorded by Shi Yan, *Ibid.*, p. 24. He also supplies some of the other inscriptions at the site. For instance, the inscription dated tenth year of Kaiyūan (722) carved next to that of Feng Kang's, and the one second year of Yüanhe (807). He also mentions the existence of inscriptions carved during the Huichang (841–47) and the Dazhong (847–60) eras. The Post-Tang epigraphy records the visits of worshipers rather than the addition of new images. All the above inscriptions are also mentioned in Wen Tingkuan, "Guanyūan Chien Foyan jianjie," *Wenwu*, 12 (1961), pp. 31–37, the most thorough discussion of the site up to now. The *New Tang History*, Feng Kang biography, confirms that the same person, in the third year of Kaiyūan (715), left the post of Tsoshuchang [167], Grandee of the Tenth Order, to assume that of Ceshi [168], Prefect of Izhou, and that the fourth year of the same era (716) was appointed Huangmenlang [169], Gentleman of the Palace Gate. The translation of the titles follows Charles O. Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China* (Stanford, 1985), pp. 261, 525, 558.
 24. Those scholars are misled by the information supplied by the Qing gazetteer *Guangyūanxianzhi* (1757), according to which a trestled road existed at the Thousand Buddhas Cliff prior to Tang. Feng Kang substituted it with a stone passage and started the carving of the images in the cliff. The already mentioned *Shuzhong mingshengji*, in chapter twenty-four, speaks of the existence of a trestled road, of the carving sponsored by Feng Kang and the expansion of the site which became a "thoroughfare" (*sic*), but does not state that the Prefect was the initiator of the site. The above information stems from Wen Tingkuan, *Wenwu*, 12 (1961), p. 32.
 25. Su Yan [55] is mentioned in the *New Tang History*, biography of the same, as a very important official of the Kaiyūan period. He held successively the following titles: Libushangshu [170], Minister of Rites, Ichienchiaodatushan [171], Acting Grand Governor General, and Anchajiedu Jiannanjuzhou [172], Surveillant and Military Commissioner of All the Zhou of the Jiannan Circuit. He died the fifteenth year of the Kaiyūan era (727).
 26. The cave is illustrated in Wen Tingkuan, *Op. Cit.*, p. 24, 1, 2.

27. The shape of this throne is associated with the iconography of Esoteric Buddhism. Lotus thrones supported by specific animals (the required vehicle of the deity seated on the throne) are illustrated in the *Gobushinkan* [173] of the Kongōkai [174] Mandala, a handscroll executed in ink on paper, now kept in the Kyōto Temple Onjōji [175]. This is a scroll of iconographic drawings of the Subhakarasiṃha School given in 885 to the Japanese monk Enchin [176] by the monk Fachūan [177] of the Chinglong [178], Changan. The scroll reflects the earliest teaching of Esoteric Buddhism to reach China from India. This throne supported by elephants is the seat of Buddha Akṣobhya. However, at the Thousand Buddhas Cliff, the art still reflects the teaching of Esoteric Buddhism, portraying Śākyamuni and his audience. Ishida Isatōyo, *Mikkyōga*, Series Nihon no bijutsu, no. 33, (Tokyo, 1970), p. 53.

28. The device of carving only half of the image is widespread in Sichuan sculpture and became especially popular in the Late and post-Tang. Notable examples are the guardians carved around the marble tomb of King Jian [179] of Shu (918), in Chengdu, and also the images attending the Parinirvāna at Baodingshan, Dazu, (Southern Song, 1178–1249).

29. A similar presence of a female by the side of Śākyamuni is found in a small Parinirvāna niche carved during the Northern Qi Dynasty above the entrance of Cave 5, the central of the trio 4, 5, 6, in the Southern group, at Xiangtangshan, Hebei. See Alexander C. Soper, "Imperial Cave—Chapels of the Northern Dynasties: Donors, Beneficiaries, Dates," *Artibus Asiae*, vol. 28, 4 (1966), pp. 241–70.

30. Stanley Weinstein, *Buddhism under the T'ang* (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 41–43.

31. This icon is part of a series of famous Buddhist images in India which the pilgrims visited. The "Jewelled Buddha" corresponds to the icon at Bodhi Gaya. It represents Śākyamuni seated on the *vajrasana* throne under the Bodhi tree at the moment of Enlightenment. See Alexander C. Soper "Representations of famous Images at Tun-huang," *Artibus Asiae*, vol. 27, 4 (1965), pp. 349–64. There is no doubt that this iconographic type reached the Tang court by mid-seventh century. Xūan Zang left a detailed description of this image and how it had been miraculously fashioned by Maitreya in disguise and adorned afterwards by a monk with jewels and crown. See *Da Tang Xiyūji* [180], chapter 8, T. 51, no. 2087, pp. 916a, b. Most likely the Tang emissary Wang Xūance [181] had this image copied in Bodhi Gaya by the painter Song Fazhi [182] who had accompanied him to India. Wang also supervised the making of a replica in Luoyang, see *Fayūan zhulin* [183] (668), T. 53, no. 2122, pp. 502c–503a. Lastly, Yijing [184] upon returning from India in 695 presented this icon to Empress Wu who had expressly gone to meet him at the gate of Luoyang, see *Song Gaosheng zhuan*, T. 50, no. 2061, p. 710b. It is therefore no surprise that this image of the "Jewelled Buddha" should be carved at Longmen, on the east side, in the Leigutai Caves which were sponsored by the Empress. The original setting of the three Leigutai Caves is at present so wrecked to hinder a more accurate comparison with the Guangyūan Buddha. As of March 1986, the northern Leigutai Cave no longer existed. The central and southern Leigutai still survive. Aside from being very damaged, their images, among them the "Jewelled Buddha" of the southern, have been moved to and assembled under a porch built in the former location of the northern cave. Under this porch there are now seven monumental Buddhas, two of them (if I recall correctly) are "Jewelled Buddhas". The original plans of the Leigutai Caves and their description are found in Mizuno Seiichi, *Ryūmon sekkutsu no kenkyū: A Study of the Buddhist Cave Temples at Lung-men, Honan* (Tokyo, 1941), pp. 120–23, pls. 98–100.

32. See footnote 7.

33. I was informed by the Cultural Relics Bureau of the existence of three inscriptions corresponding to the tenth year of Tianbao (751), the thirteenth year of Yüanhe (818), and the seventh year of Taihe (833), but I could not verify the statement. The site has not yet been surveyed nor numbered.

34. The most relevant cave at the Western Cliff is the Lingzhidong [185], a very large cave with a monumental Śākyamuni, one hundred Lohans, and a Thousand Buddhas pattern carved all over the surface of the walls. The cave is ascribed to Tang.
35. South of the Shenxianpo are the Niches numbers 13–26, the group is called Laojundong [186]; north of the Shenxianpo are the Niches numbers 95–101 and 119–122. At the site, in addition, are the boulders called Shanmenshi [187] and Yunpingshi with a few carving. Ségalen photographed these sections of the site, *Mission archéologique*, pls. 81–119.
36. The information on the Southern Cliff here submitted stems from the excellent two-parts study by Gu Sen, “Bazhong Nankan moyan zaoxiang yishu yanjiu,” *Shuoshixüewei lunwenji* (Collection of Master's Essays) (Beijin, 1985), pp. 81–119. The name Kuanfusi is found in a poem by the Tang writer Yang Shio [188] quoted in *Bazhouzhi*, chapter 8.
37. The text of this inscription is found in Ōmura Seiigai, *Shina bijutsushi, chōsohen* (Tokyo, 1915), p. 533. The rubbing is published in Yüan Anzhi, “Sichuan Bazhongxian shiku tiaochaji,” *Kaogu yü wenwu*, 1 (1986), p. 55.
38. Gu Sen, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 83–85.
39. The text of some of these inscriptions is very lengthy and is found in Ōmura Seiigai, *Op. Cit.*: that of Niche 71, pp. 534–535; of Niche 69, p. 532; of Niche 87, p. 533; of Niche 93, pp. 533–34. The text of the inscription in Niche 89 is not available; that of Niche 65 is found in Tao Makuan, “Sichuan Bazhong Nankande moyan zaoxiang,” *Wenwu*, 5 (1956), p. 52.
40. Ōmura Seiigai, *Op. Cit.*, the text of the inscription in Niche 101, p. 534; of Niche 71, pp. 534–35; of Niche 77, p. 535. The remaining inscriptions are summarized by Gu Sen, *Op. Cit.*, p. 88.
41. It can be compared to the Longmen Guanyin carved outside the Wanfodong, dated 681, see *Longmen Sculpture*, Cultural Institute for the Protection of Longmen, ed., (Beijing, 1981) fig. 177. An illustration of the Guanyin at the Southern Cliff, Bazhong is found in Ségalen, *Mission Archéologique*, pl. 103.a.
42. For instance, the early Tang Paradise of Amitābha painted on the east wall of Cave 332 at Dunhuang, see Dunhuang Research Institute, ed., *Chugoku sekkutsu: Tonkō Makkōkutsu*, 5 vols., (Tokyo, 1980–81), vol. 3, pl. 94, and p. 234. Representations of Bodhisattvas seated on lotuses whose stems are all interconnected were also carved at Longmen, in the northern Leigutai Cave, now destroyed. Tokiwa and Sekino, *Shina bunka shiseki*, vol. 2, pl. 72 a,b.
43. A photograph of this group is available in Ségalen, *Mission archéologique*, fig. 101.d. It is perhaps meaningful to this context a description in the *Lidai minghua ji* [189] by Zhang Yanyüan [190], (preface dated 847), of the Jingai Temple [191] and its sculpture, Loyang. “Within the Buddha Hall is a clay image of the Bodhisattva Maitreya under the Bodhisattva (Bodhi?) tree. A likeness of the Bodhisattva (Maitreya) which Wang Hsuan-ts'e had (had) drawn in the western region and brought here ... served as a model ... In the easternmost intercolumnar space an image of Maitreya, in the westernmost ... an image of Maitreya.” William R. Acker, *Some T'ang and Pre-T'ang Texts on Chinese Painting* (Leiden, 1954), pp. 307–9. The representation, thus, consists of the same image repeated three times interpreting the three assemblies presided over by Maitreya after he reached Buddhahood in the town of Ketumati. In the *sūtras* which recount Maitreya's last incarnation – the earliest *Milo xiasheng jing* [192] translated by Dharmarakṣa, about 300, and the two versions by Kumārajīva *Milo xiasheng cheng Fo jing* [193] and *Milo da cheng Fo jing* [194] (the most elaborate) – it is not clear where and when the assemblies took place, whether at different times and places, or simultaneously. At Dunhuang, the paintings show a group of three Buddhas seated with a large retinue, for instance Cave

- 148, High Tang, upper part of south wall, *Tonkō Makkōkutsu*, vol. 4, pl. 28. The sculpture group in the Luoyang Temple Jingai described by Zhang Yanyuan seems to follow the same format adopted at Dunhuang to illustrate Maitreya's Triple Assembly. Acker supplies additional information about this temple which backs the identification of the sculpture group as a Maitreya group. This temple was built by the Emperor Zhong Zong [195] (reigned 684) for his mother Wuzetian. In 685, the monk Xie Huaiyi [196], a favorite of the Empress, had a hall built in the temple and changed the name of the latter of Foshouji [197] which is the translation of the Sanskrit *vyākaraṇa* (profetic allusion). This term is used in the title of the Maitreya's *sūtras* to allude to all the events connected with his last incarnation. See Acker, *Ibid.*, p. 353. In light of the role played by the cult of Maitreya in the Empress' ascent to power, it is quite possible that the triple group of sculptures at the Jingai Temple illustrated Maitreya's Buddhahood and preaching. During the Empress' reign, the same imagery gained increased popularity and spread from the metropolitan centers to places like Bazhong.
44. See footnote 31.
45. At Dunhuang, the series of images from famous Indian places is painted in several caves. In Cave 237 of Middle Tang, *Tonkō Makkōkutsu*, vol. 4, pls. 104 ff., there is a representation of a Buddha with double head, but shown standing. In the cartouche, next to the image, one reads that two poor worshipers jointly invested their money to have a painter fashion a Buddha image. Thus, the painter portrayed it with two heads. See *Da Tang Xiyüji*, chapter 2, T. 51, no. 2087, p. 880a. The other image represented standing with the left arm pointing to the sky, the other down alongside the body is also included in the group of famous images in Cave 237 at Dunhuang. In Dunhuang, the iconography is more complete than in Bazhong, since the Buddha holds the sun and moon. This imagery refers to Śākyamuni's display of supernatural power when having overcome Mara and attained Enlightenment, Śākyamuni stood in space touching the two heavenly bodies, see Alexander C. Soper, "Representations of famous Images at Tun-huang," p. 362. The third Buddha shown standing with hands raised in front of the chest, but not performing any specific *mudrā*, is too generic to identify.
46. Gu Sen, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 92–96. The two roads leading from the northern provinces to Sichuan are mentioned by Wang Jiayu, see footnote 15.
47. Gu Sen, *Ibid.*, footnotes 22, 23, 24, p. 118. The officials were natives of Henan, Hebei, Shanxi, Shaanxi, none of Sichuan.
48. This is recorded in the Ming gazetteer *Anyüexianzhi* [198], chapter 6 "Chongkanfeixian" [199], according to which as early as Northern Zhou there was Buddhist cliff sculpture in the county. The *Shuzhong mingsheng ji*, chapter 30, records Buddhist activity in the county even earlier, in the second year of Putong [200] (521) during the Liang Dynasty, and gives as a source the *Tongzhilüe* [201].
49. Hu Wenhe, Li Guanzhi, "Shulun Anyüe Wo Fogou Tangdai Niepanbianxiangdu," *Sichuan wenwu*, 4 (1984), pp. 35–39. I owe a personal debt of gratitude to Hu Wenhe who helped me to gather information on Buddhist sculpture in Anyüe County.
50. Alexander C. Soper, "A T'ang Parinirvāna stele," *Artibus Asiae*, vol. 22, 1/2 (1959), pp. 154–69. The Ishixian stele is now exhibited in the Taiyüan Provincial Museum, Shanxi.
51. Two Chinese versions of *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* are available: a northern one translated by Dharmakṣema (Bei Liang, 385–433), 40 chapters, and a southern version, a revision of the preceding done by Huiyan [202] and others (Liu Song, 424–53), 36 chapters. The Southern text is available in English in the translation by Yamamoto Kosho, *Mahāparinirvāṇa sūtra*, The Karin Buddhological Series no. 5, (Oyama, 1973). I have used the northern version, T. 12, no. 374, chapter one, p. 365 ff., chapter 40, pp. 601–2.

52. The following account is based on the information received from Hu Wenhe and on the article by Hu Wenhe, Li Guanzhi, "Anyüe Wo Fogou Tangdai Shijing," *Sichuan wenwu*, 2 (1986), pp. 20–25. In Sichuan there is another site where during the Tang Dynasty, or perhaps earlier, *sūtras* were carved on the cliff, namely at Lingyanshan, Guanxian [203], see Hu Wenhe, "Guanxian Lingyanshan Tangdai shijing," *Sichuan wenwu*, 2 (1984), pp. 33–35.
53. According to the same inscription, the translation of this *sūtra* was by the monk Tuoboli [204], in the second year of Yongchun [205] (683).
54. At the southern courts, especially Liu Song and Liang, the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* not only was translated, but commentaries and exegesis of its text were undertaken. Emperor Wu of Liang (reigned 502–49) wrote a commentary of the *sūtra* and ordered that a collection be made of all the existing commentaries. In the second half of the sixth century, the Nirvāṇa teaching was absorbed in the Tientai School. See Kenneth K. S. Ch'en, *Buddhism in China* (Princeton, 1963), pp. 124–29.
55. This *sūtra* is listed in the Tripiṭaka, T. 3, no. 156, as having been translated during Later Han, but it was translated most likely during the late Six Dynasties or Early Tang, See Ono Gemmyō, *Bukkyō no bijutsu to rekishi* (Tokyo, 1935), pp. 14–15.
56. All the above information is gathered from the pamphlet *Jiajiang Chien Foyan*, Jiajiang Cultural Relics Bureau, ed., (Jiajiang, 1984). I had no opportunity to verify the inscriptions. Ségalen visited Jiajiang and photographed some of its sculpture, *Mission archéologique*, pls. 136–43.
57. The information is based on the pamphlet *Leshan Da Fo*, Leshan Cultural Relics Bureau, ed., (Leshan, 1984) which in turn gathers it from two inscriptions available at the site: one the *Jiazhou Lingyun Da Foxiang ji* [206] of the Tang Military Governor Feng Gao, the other the *Zhongtiao Lingyunsi ji* [207] of the Ming official Peng Rushi [208].
58. Both the Rishi Vasu and the *preta* (or *pretas*) are part of the twenty-eight personages forming the retinue of the Thousand-hands Guanyin. See Sawa Ryūken, ed., *Butsuzō zuten* (Tokyo, 1976), pp. 64, 137. This imagery has many painted versions among the silk banners of Dunhuang. I single out for comparison, as one of the earliest, the Thousand-hands, Eleven-headed Guanyin in the collection of the British Museum, ascribed to mid-ninth century. In this example, each member of the retinue is identified by a cartouche. An emaciated white haired and white bearded Vasu is also shown shielding his eyesight while staring at Guanyin towering above him. At Guanyin's feet, the *pretas* are two: a female and a male. They stretch out their arms to receive the sweet dew and the seven jewels, respectively, from Guanyin. See, Roderick Whitfield, *The Arts of Central Asia, The Stein Collection in the British Museum, Paintings from Dunhuang*, 3 vols., (Tokyo, 1982–83), vol. 1, pl. 18, figs. 53, 54.
59. Dazu shike yanjiuxuehui, ed., *Dazu shike ishu* (Chengdu, 1984), p. 33.
60. A Mid-Tang example is painted on the south wall of Cave 154, see *Tonkō Makkōkutsu*, vol. 4, pl. 99; an unpublished High Tang clay sculpture of the same deity (which I personally saw) is in Cave 459. The Heavenly Guardian is represented wearing all the familiar articles of clothing and is supported by the Mother Goddess. It is part of a group formed by a Buddha, two monks, two Bodhisattvas, and two Heavenly Kings, one no longer extant. The images are about 1.50 meter high. The iconography of this Vaiśravaṇa type has been studied by Phyllis Granoff, "Tobatsu Bishamon: Three Japanese Statues in the United States and an Outline of the Rise of This Cult in East Asia," *East and West*, vol. 20, nos. 1–2 (March–June 1970), pp. 144–68.
61. The *Dafangguang shilun jing* [209], The Great Expansive Sūtra of the Ten Wheels, T. 13, no. 410, was translated anonymously as early as Northern Liang (397–439). The ability of this Bodhisattva to

assume different guises to rescue those in danger is the same as that of Avalokiteśvara's. For a study of this iconography, see Marinus W. De Visser, "The Bodhisattva Tī-tsang (Jizō) in China and Japan," *Östasiatische Zeitschrift* (1913/14, 1915) especially section one, pp. 187–88. Perhaps the Tizang's cult developed quite early in Sichuan, prior to Tang, if one relies on the information supplied by the Buddhist encyclopedia *Fayüan zhulin* [183], T. 53, no. 2122, p. 392c. It tells of the existence of a painting of the Bodhisattva Tizang by the sixth century painter Zhang Sengyü [210], in the Fayü [211] Temple of Chengdu. A copy of this painting was done the second year of Lide [212] (665). It displayed miraculous power emitting light like a golden halo. That same year, another copy with similar supernatural quality was sent to the capital, to the imperial palace, where it was greatly revered. All the successive copies were likewise miraculous.

62. Stanley Weinstein, *Buddhism under the T'ang*, pp. 66–74. Among the four translations of the Amitabha's Pure Land Sūtra, the one which most vividly describes Sukhāvati is the *Wuliangshou jing*, translated by Bao Yun [213] (402), T. 12, no. 360.
63. The *Gandhavyūha* was translated by Prāṇa in 798, T. 10, no. 293. The English translation of the *Gandhavyūha* and study of its art are by Jan Fontein, *The Pilgrimage of Sudhana* (The Hague, 1967). The *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* was translated first by Buddhahadra (died 429), T. 9, no. 278. The second Tang translation was completed in 700 by Sikṣānanda, T. 10, no. 279.
64. Indian thrones of this type, their stylistic evolution, and symbolic meaning have been investigated by Jeannine Auboyer, *Le trône et son symbolisme dans l'Inde ancienne* (Paris, 1949). Examples of Nālandā bronzes can be found in Susan L. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture* (Leiden, 1984). Plate 167 shows a Buddha seated in Western pose (as the Buddha at Jiajiang), leaning against a richly adorned back-slab. The bronze is dated early to mid-ninth century, but examples from late seventh to eighth century are also available. The resemblance between Sichuanese and northeast Indian sculpture carries a very important implication, namely the possibility that these bronze images were brought back to China by pilgrims who had journeyed to the holy places of Śākyamuni's last life, or by monks who had attended the important university of Nālandā or by traders. Furthermore, the travellers may have used the shorter route which brought them from Magadha to Sichuan through Burma and Yunnan rather than the longer Silk Route through Central Asia and Gansu.
65. This site is discussed by Ding Zuchun, Wang Xixiang, "Qionglai Shisunshan moyan zaoxian," *Sichuan wenwu*, (1984), pp. 36–39.
66. The iconography of the Thousand-hands Guanyin stems from the *Chienhou chienyan Guanshiyin Pusa dabeixin duoloni jing* [214], translated by Amoghavajra, T. 20, no. 1064, pp. 115–19. For examples of this iconography painted on the Dunhuang banners, now in the collection of the British Museum, London, see footnote 58. Among the banners in the collection of the Guimet Museum, Paris, two examples are especially relevant, dated 943 and 981. See Nicole Vandier-Nicolas *et al.*, *Bannières et peintures de Touen-Houang conservées au Musée Guimet*, Series Mission Pelliot, vols. 14 and 15, (Paris, 1974), nos. 101, 103.
67. The iconography of Gaṇeśa is studied by Y. Krishan, "The origins of Gaṇeśa," *Artibus Asiae*, vol. 43, 4 (1981/82), pp. 285–301.
68. The Taima Mandala is a tapestry of silk threads probably imported from China in the second half of the eighth century and is now kept in the Nara National Museum. Its iconography is the most complete version of Amitābha's Paradise since it includes the narrative of King Ajātaśatru, the meditations given by Buddha to Queen Vaidehī (Ajātaśatru's mother), and the different degrees of welcome, nine in all, which Amitābha extends to the souls. See Okazaki Jōji, *Pure Land Buddhist Painting*, translated and adapted by Elisabeth ten Grotenhuis, (Tokyo, New York, 1977), pp. 42–53.

69. Denis Twitchett and A.H. Christie, "A Medieval Burmese Orchestra," *Asia Major*, vol. 7 (1959), pp. 176–95.
70. To my knowledge, only the relief of Amitābha's Pure Land in Niche 245 at Beishan, Dazu, attributed to Late Tang, exhibits the narrative, the meditations, and the nine degrees of welcome in addition to the Paradise. It follows, therefore, the northern models available among Dunhuang paintings. The musicians, in the Beishan niche, are carved on the ceiling; Samantabhadra and Mañjuśrī are not included, nor the boats in the pond of rebirth. See *Dazu shiku yishu*, pp. 31 and 32.

LIST OF CHINESE TERMS

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|---------|---------|
| 1. 安祿山 | 19. 山南西 |
| 2. 蜀 | 20. 重慶 |
| 3. 廣元 | 21. 韋皋 |
| 4. 巴中 | 22. 劉闢 |
| 5. 綿陽 | 23. 僖宗 |
| 6. 樂山 | 24. 黃巢 |
| 7. 夾江 | 25. 阡能 |
| 8. 大足 | 26. 陳敬瑄 |
| 9. 寶頂山 | 27. 田令孜 |
| 10. 北山 | 28. 玄宗 |
| 11. 彭山 | 29. 武則天 |
| 12. 成都 | 30. 李賢 |
| 13. 方佛寺 | 31. 高宗 |
| 14. 河西 | 32. 利州 |
| 15. 南詔 | 33. 金牛道 |
| 16. 益州 | 34. 秦 |
| 17. 劍南西 | 35. 皇澤寺 |
| 18. 劍南東 | 36. 千佛岩 |

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| 37. 觀音岩 | 56. 大佛洞 |
| 38. 嘉陵江 | 57. 麦积山 |
| 39. 貝觀 | 58. 大雲寺 |
| 40. 宝曆 | 59. 千佛洞 |
| 41. 武士護 | 60. 水子寺 |
| 42. 太宗 | 61. 成山 |
| 43. 廣政 | 62. 神仙坡 |
| 44. 惠簡洞 | 63. <u>巴州志</u> |
| 45. 天龍八部 | 64. 嚴武 |
| 46. 劉宋 | 65. 光福寺 |
| 47. <u>出三藏集記</u> | 66. 雲屏石 |
| 48. 興福寺 | 67. 奏請巴州南龕寺題名表 |
| 49. 影岫山 | 68. 乾元 |
| 50. 咸豐 | 69. 顧森 |
| 51. 大玄洞 | 70. 輿地碑目, 王象 |
| 52. 劍南道監察使銀青光祿大夫行
益州都督府長史 <u>豐抗</u> 功德 | 71. <u>巴中縣志</u> |
| 53. <u>蜀中名勝記</u> | 72. 張令 |
| 54. 題利州北佛龕記 | 73. 唐守也 |
| 55. 蘇頲 | 74. 天竺 |

75. 乾元
76. 会昌
77. 蒙阳郡
78. 乾符
79. 中和
80. 張祚
81. 元君
82. 李思弘
83. 文德
84. 搢鼓臺
85. 未仓道
86. 大巴山
87. 秦嶺山
88. 纪王李慎
89. 吴山李略
90. 章怀太子李賢
91. 佛爷湾
92. 柳得大隋大业五年造前件古像
93. 清江乡
94. 華嚴經
95. 普州
96. 渝道
97. 巴
98. 樂至
99. 家字
100. 安岳县
101. 八庙乡
102. 通賢江
103. 胡文和
104. 猗氏县
105. 佛頂真勝陀羅尼經
106. 二月十五日長江县李涉敬造供养
107. 普州安岳县沙門僧义造涅槃經一龕永为供养
108. 禮三藏經开元十五年
109. 佛說禪祕要經
110. 大方便佛報恩經
111. 般若波羅蜜多心經
112. 开元釋教录

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| 113. 智昇 | 132. 四川美術學院 |
| 114. 青衣江 | 133. 叶毓山 |
| 115. 大中 | 134. 李已生 |
| 116. 大曆 | 135. 王官乙 |
| 117. 地藏 | 136. 道汪 |
| 118. 岷江, 大渡河 | 137. 河間 |
| 119. 谷通 | 138. 吐谷 |
| 120. 节度使韦皋 | 139. 秦始 |
| 121. 荣县 | 140. <u>高僧傳</u> |
| 122. 北山 | 141. 楊慎 |
| 123. 昆嵎勒, 昆嵎博 | 142. <u>全蜀藝文志</u> |
| 124. 兜跋毘沙門天 | 143. 文同, 彭卅张氏画记 |
| 125. <u>大集地藏十輪經</u> | 144. 章惇 |
| 126. <u>華嚴經</u> | 145. 杜甫 |
| 127. 邓睐县 | 146. 孫位 |
| 128. 石笋山 | 147. <u>益卅名畫錄</u> , 黃休復 |
| 129. 大邑 | 148. 張曲本 |
| 130. 盘陀寺 | 149. 明王 |
| 131. 乾德三年九月九日思安僧俗游此 | 150. 金華寺 |

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| 151. 高道興 | 170. 礼部尚書 |
| 152. 李昇 | 171. 俄德校大都督長 |
| 153. 楊國忠 | 172. 按察使度劍南諸州 |
| 154. 楊寶妃 | 173. <u>五部心觀</u> |
| 155. 則田多 | 174. 金剛界 |
| 156. 曹學佺 | 175. 園城寺 |
| 157. <u>廣元縣志</u> | 176. 丹珍 |
| 158. 陳鴻恩. 皇澤寺書事碑記 | 177. 法全 |
| 159. <u>無量壽經</u> | 178. 青龍 |
| 160. <u>大乘本生心地觀經</u> | 179. 王連 |
| 161. <u>文殊師利問經</u> | 180. <u>大唐西域記</u> |
| 162. <u>觀世音菩薩授記經</u> | 181. 王玄策 |
| 163. <u>仁王般若經</u> | 182. 宋法智 |
| 164. <u>出三藏集記</u> | 183. <u>法苑珠林</u> |
| 165. 明帝 | 184. 義淨 |
| 166. 齊文宣 | 185. 儋芝洞 |
| 167. 左庶長 | 186. 老君洞 |
| 168. 刺史 | 187. 山門石 |
| 169. 黃門郎 | 188. 羊士驎 |

189. 歷代名畫記
190. 張彥遠
191. 敬愛寺
192. 彌勒下生經
193. 彌勒下生成佛經
194. 彌勒大成佛經
195. 中宗
196. 薛懷義
197. 佛授記寺
198. 安岳縣志
199. 崇龕廢縣
200. 晉通
201. 通志略
202. 慈巖
203. 靈岩山. 灌縣
204. 陀波利
205. 永淳
206. 嘉州凌云大佛像記
207. 重修凌云寺記
208. 彭汝實
209. 大方廣+華嚴經
210. 張僧繇
211. 法聚寺
212. 鹿野德
213. 寶云
214. 千手千眼觀世音菩薩大悲心陀羅尼經
215. 驃

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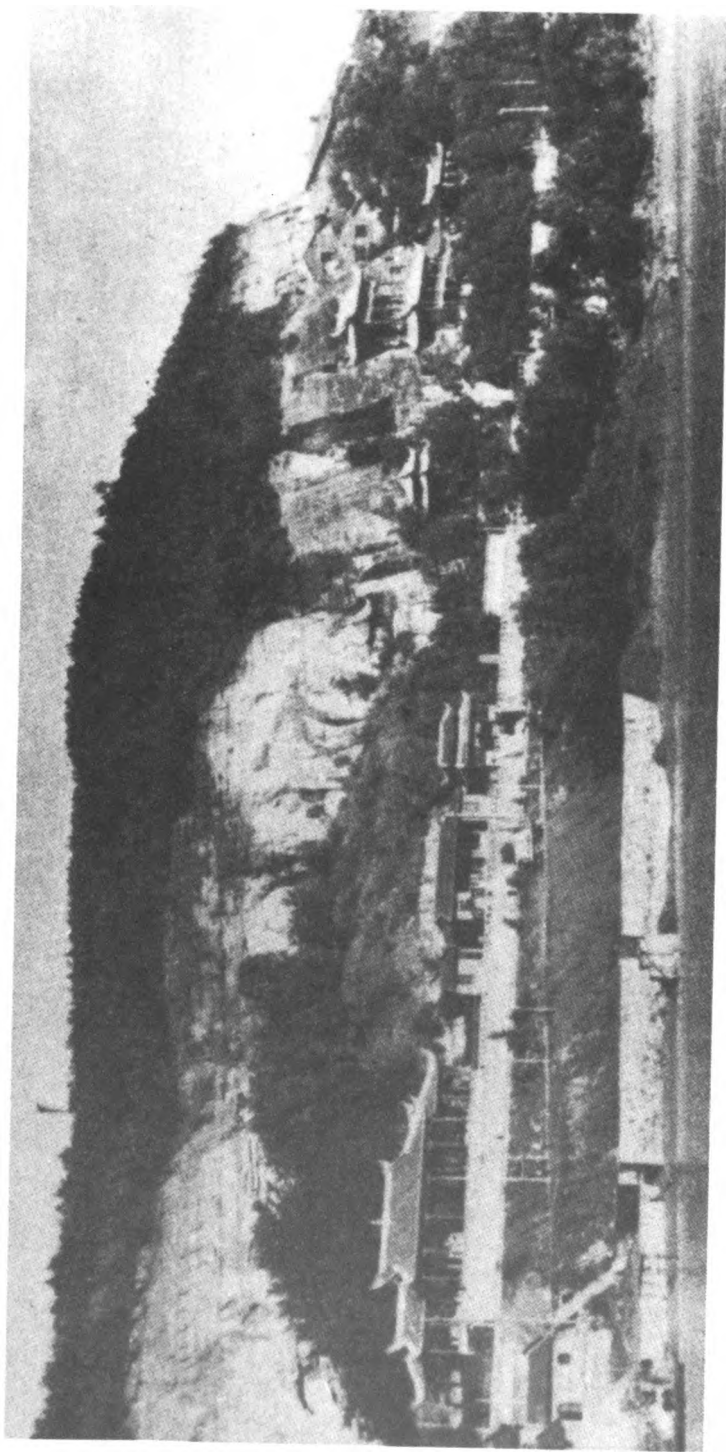
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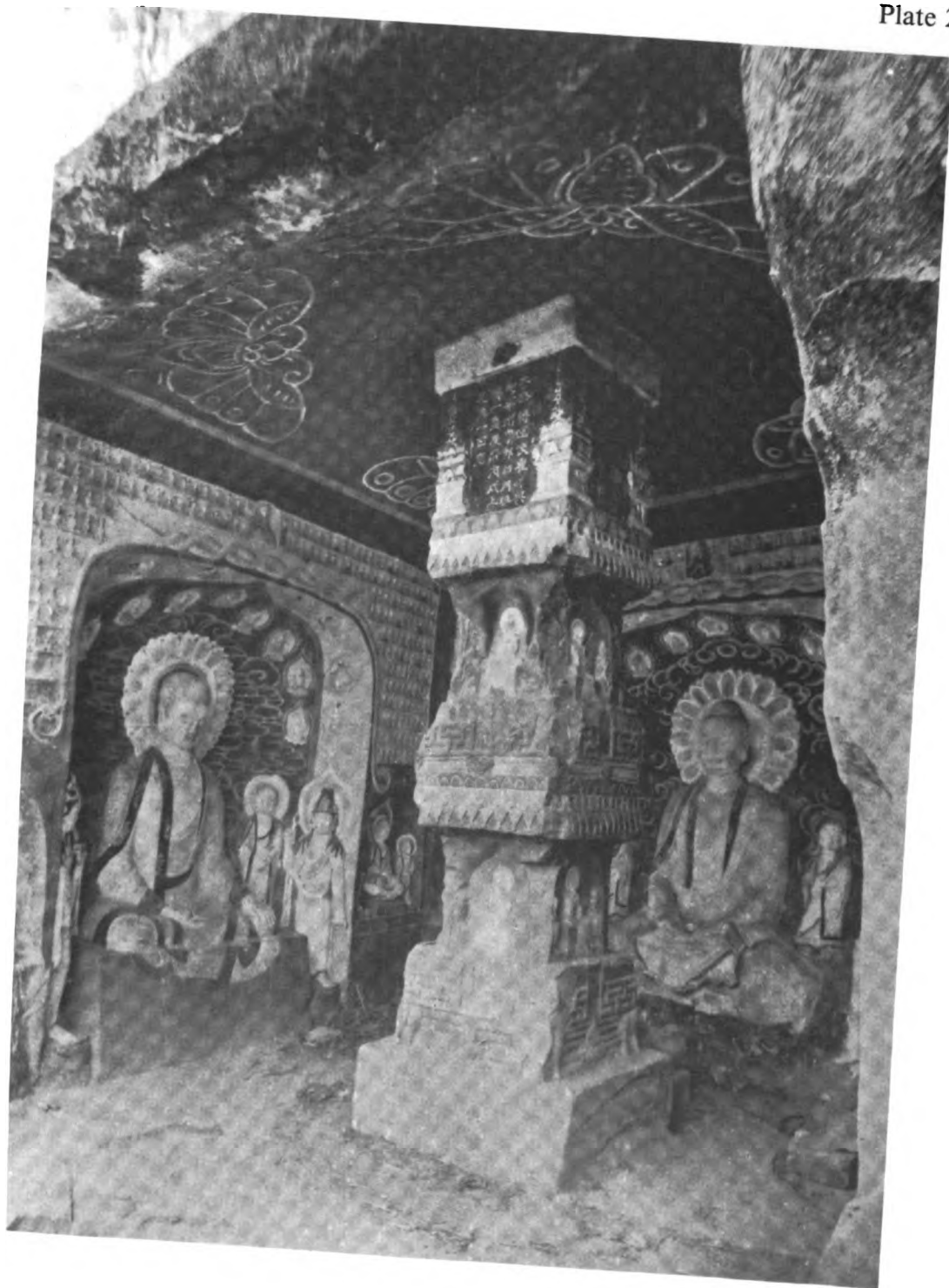


Plate 3





Plate 4



Plate 5

Plate 6-7



Plate 6



Plate 7



Plate 8

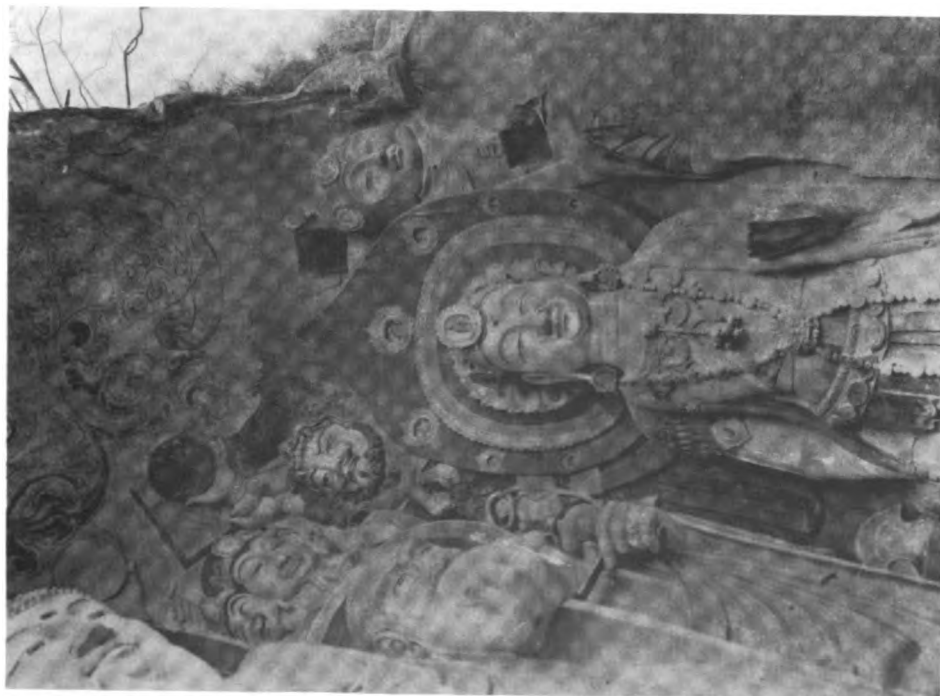


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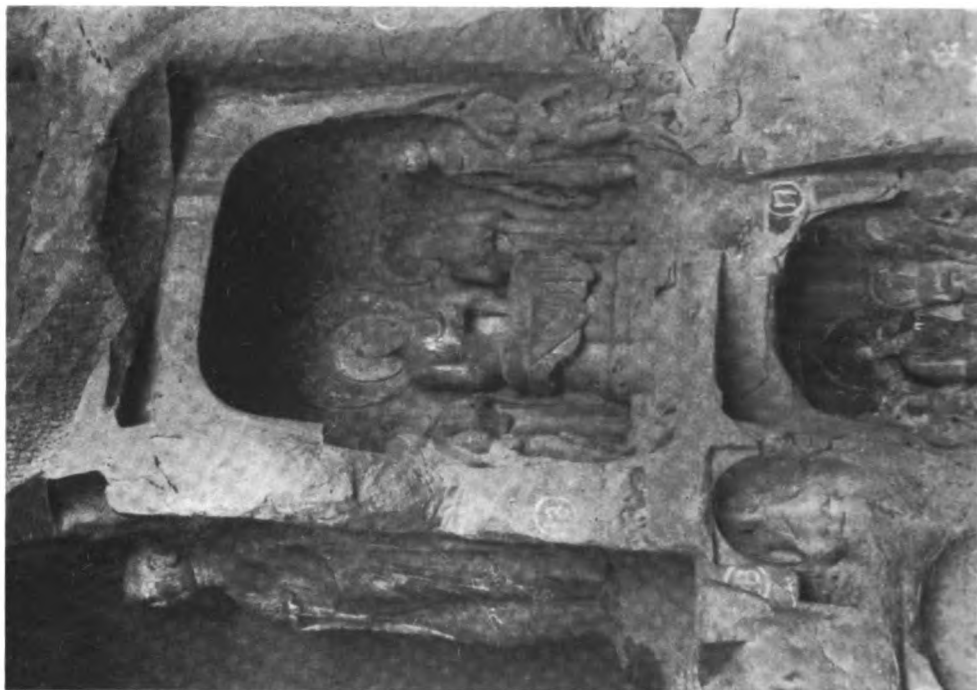


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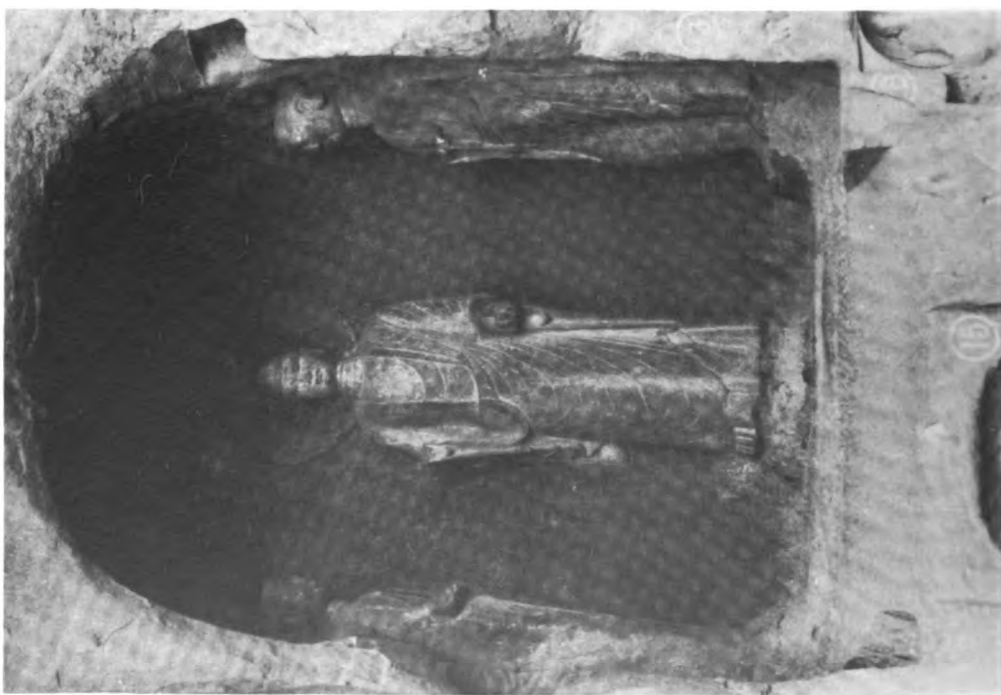


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Plate 13

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Plate 14



Plate 15



Plate 16



Plate 17



Plate 18



Plate 19



Plate 20



Plate 21

Plate 22-23



Plate 22

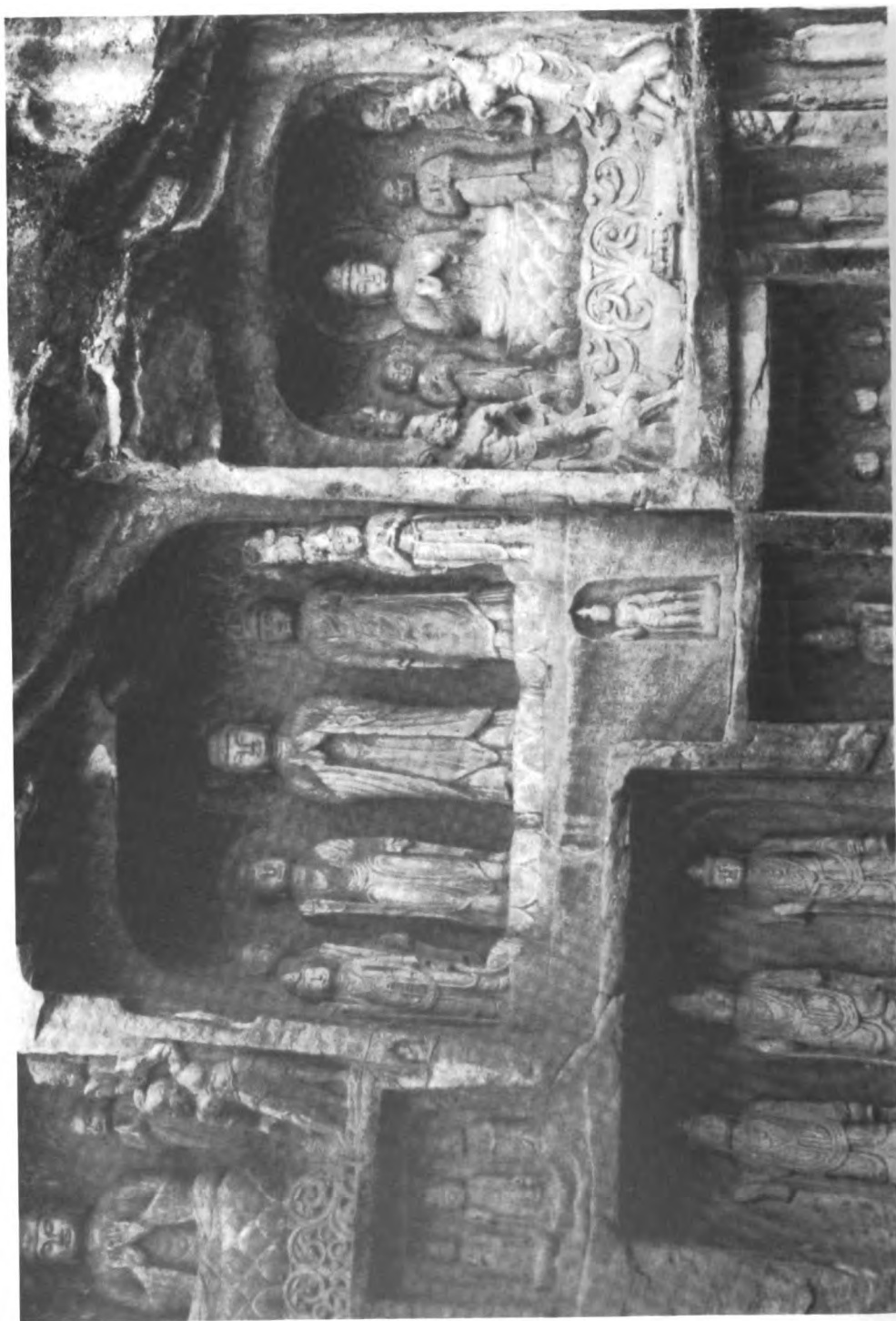


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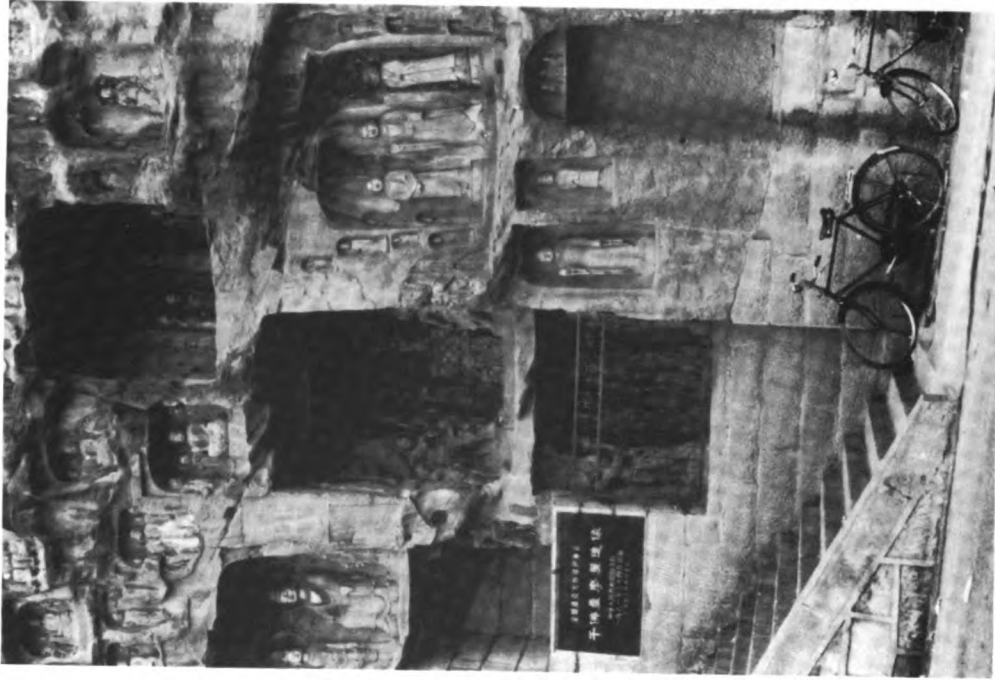


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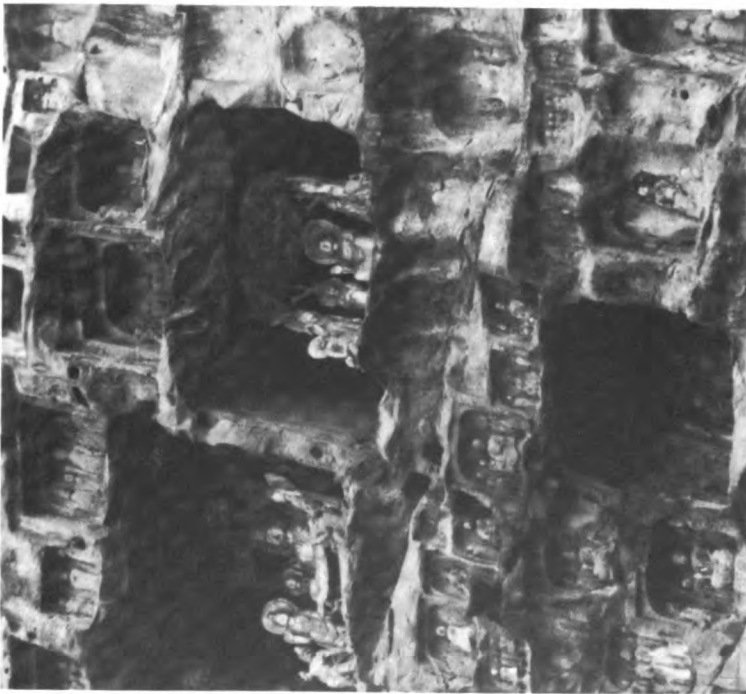


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Plate 30



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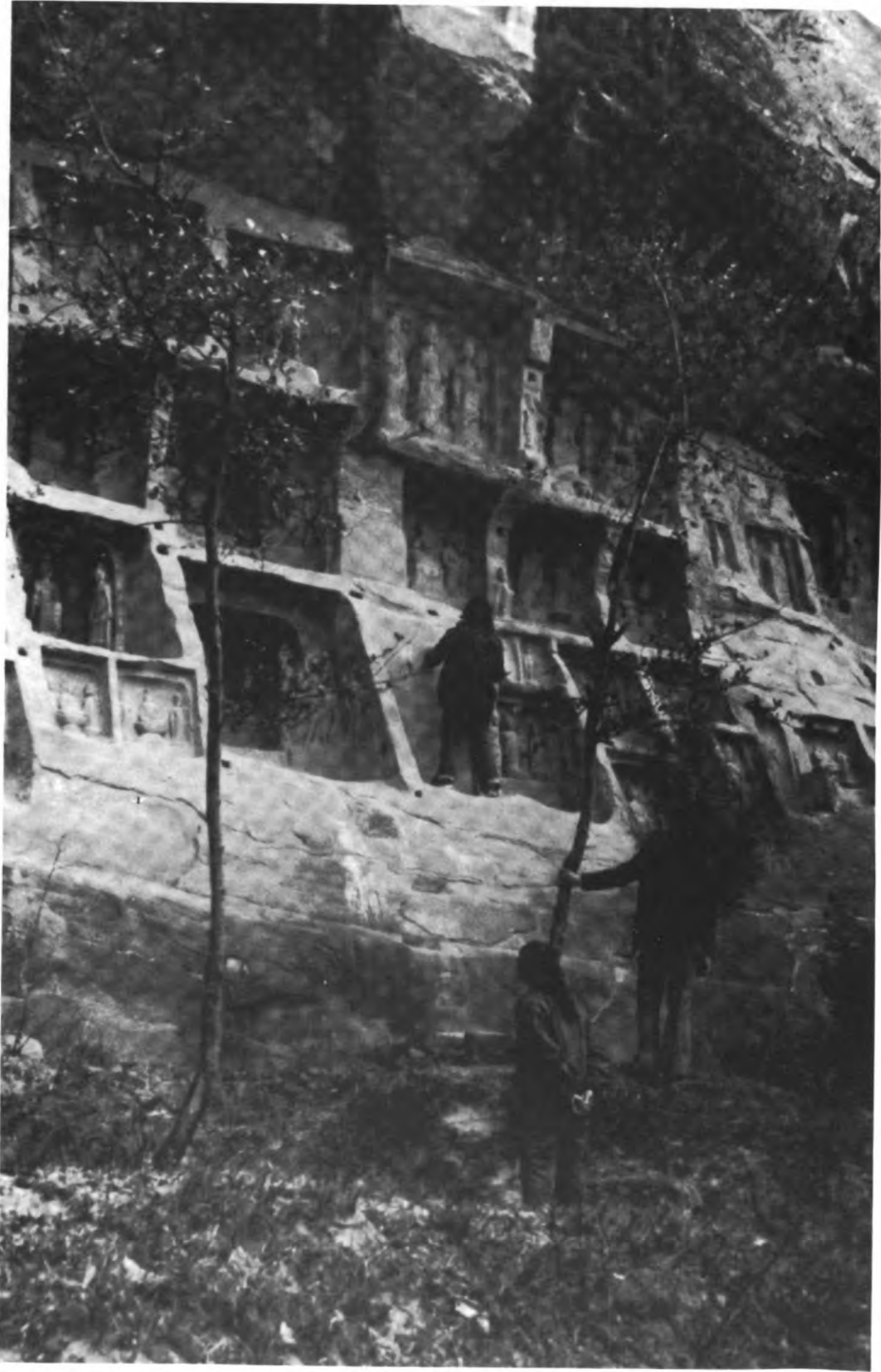


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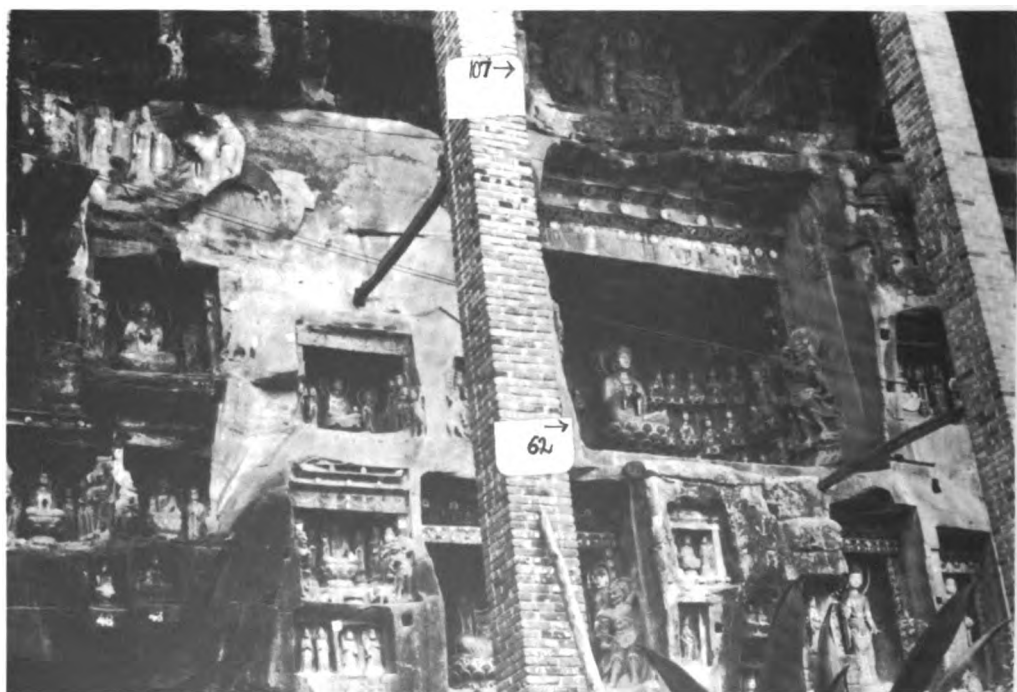


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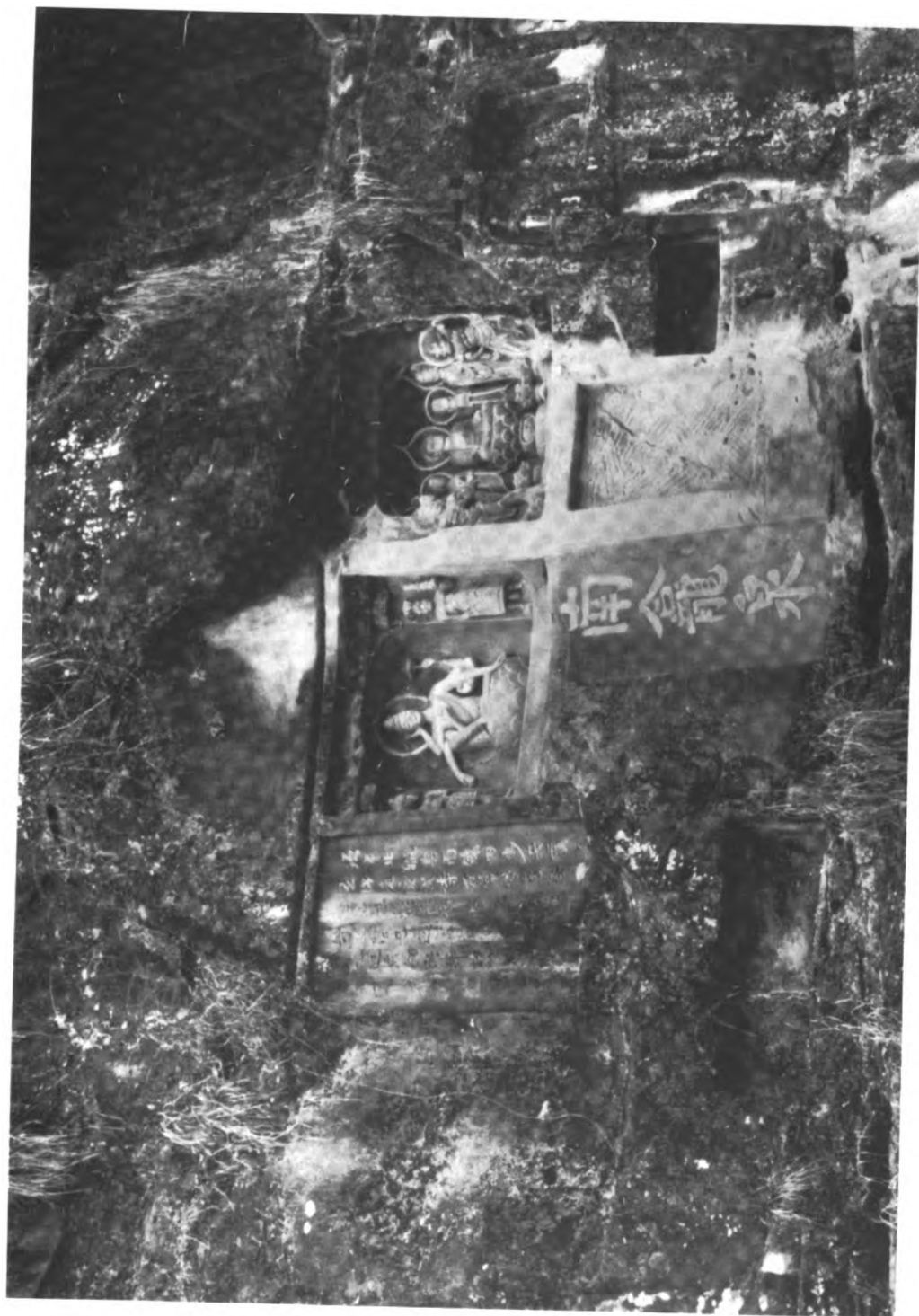


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Plate 36





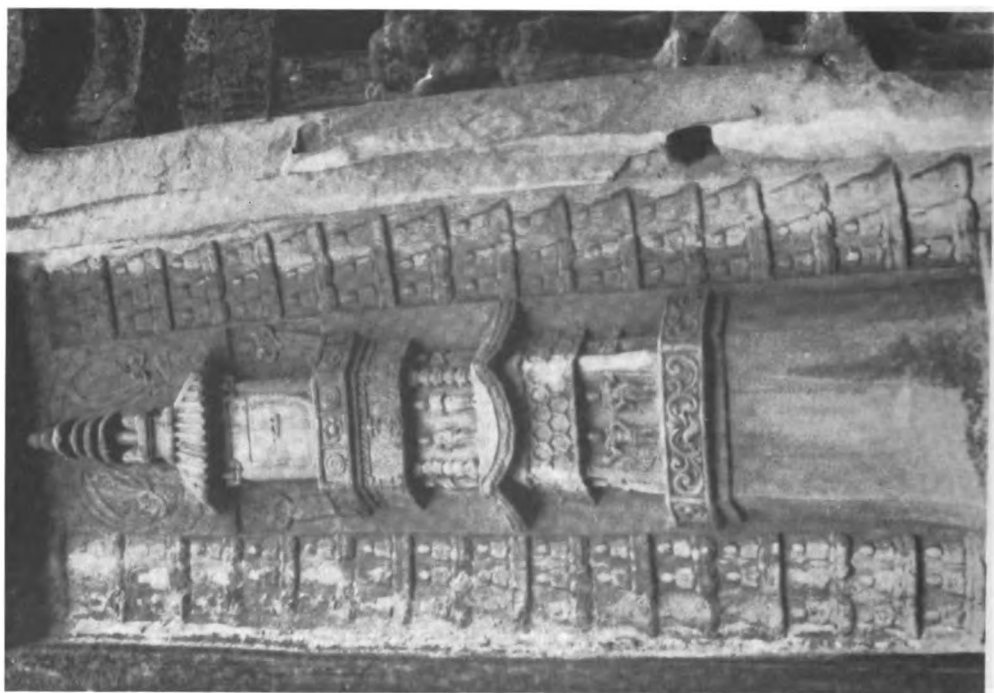


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Plate 42

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Plate 43



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Plate 47



Plate 48



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Plate 52



Plate 53



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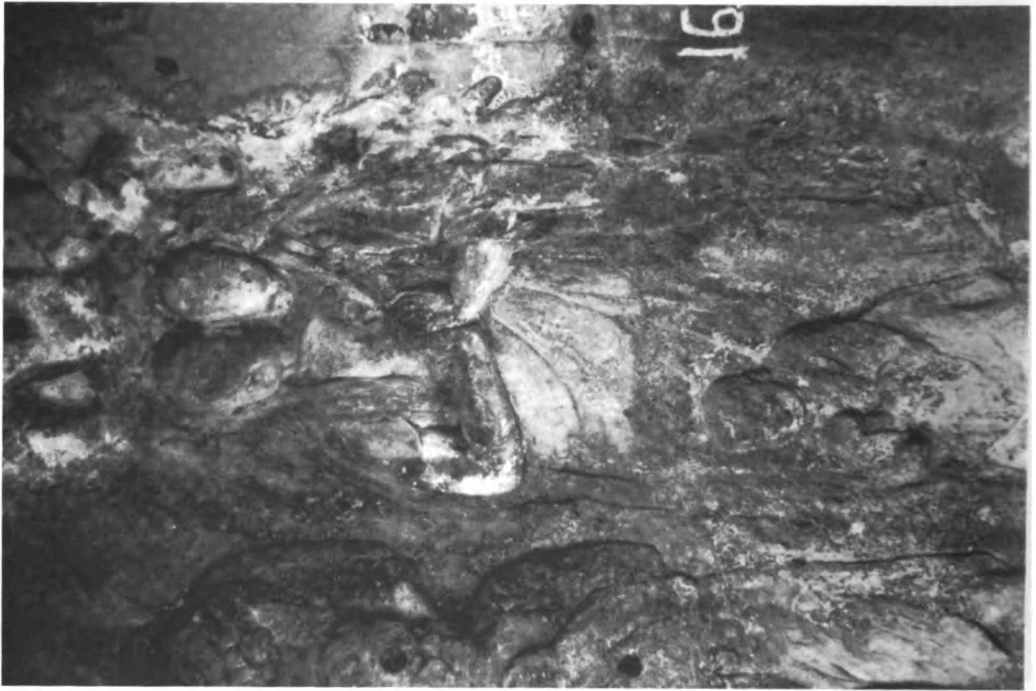


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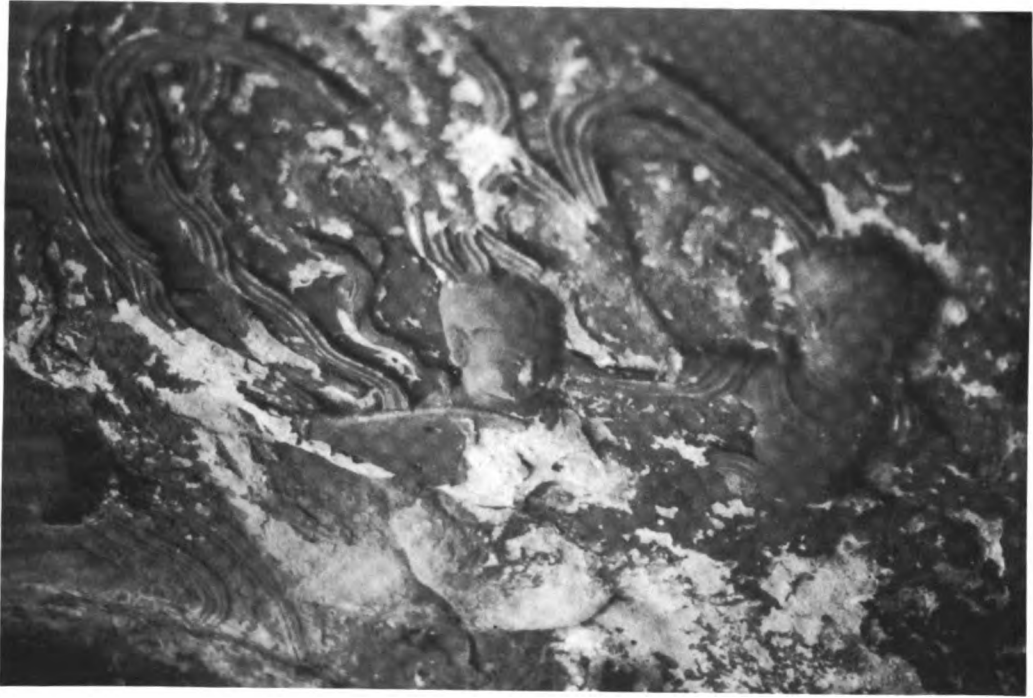


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Plate 61



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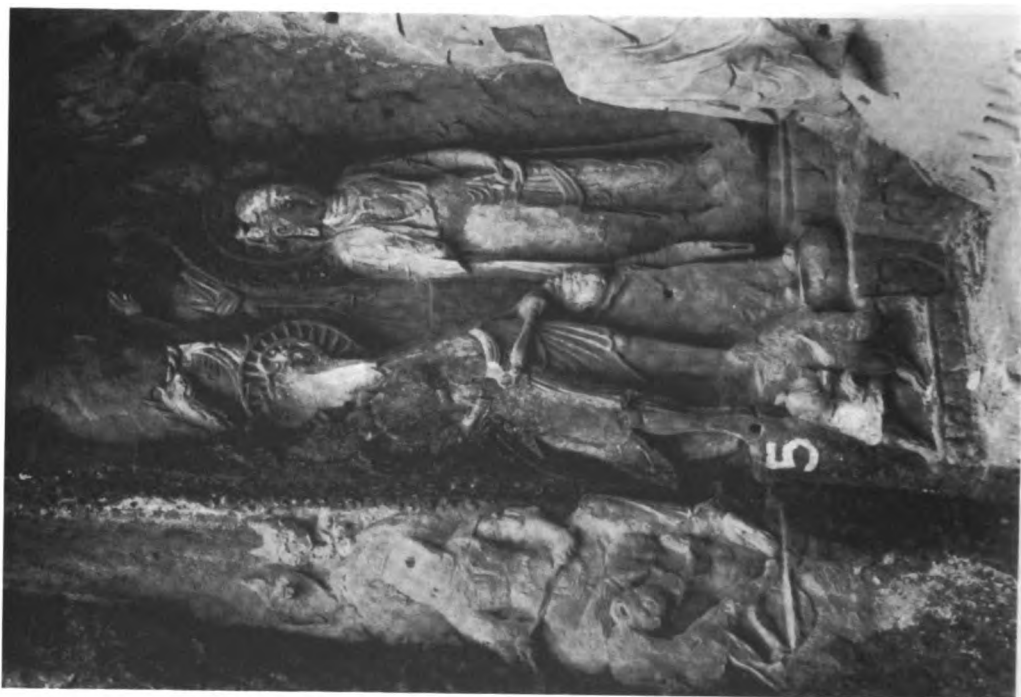


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Plate 65



Plate 66





Plate 68



Plate 69

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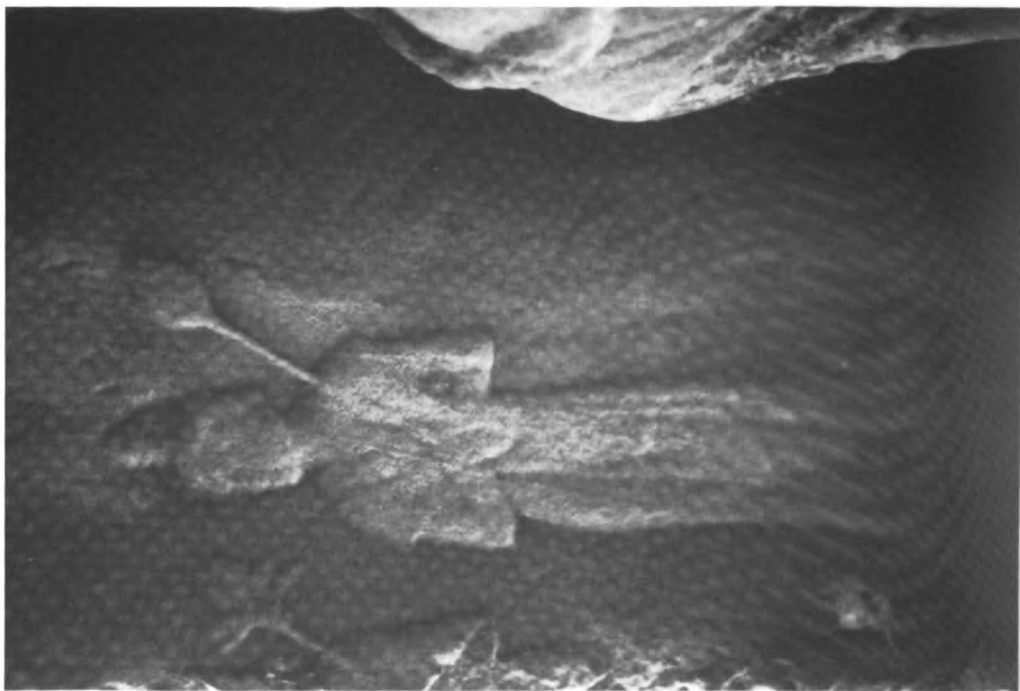


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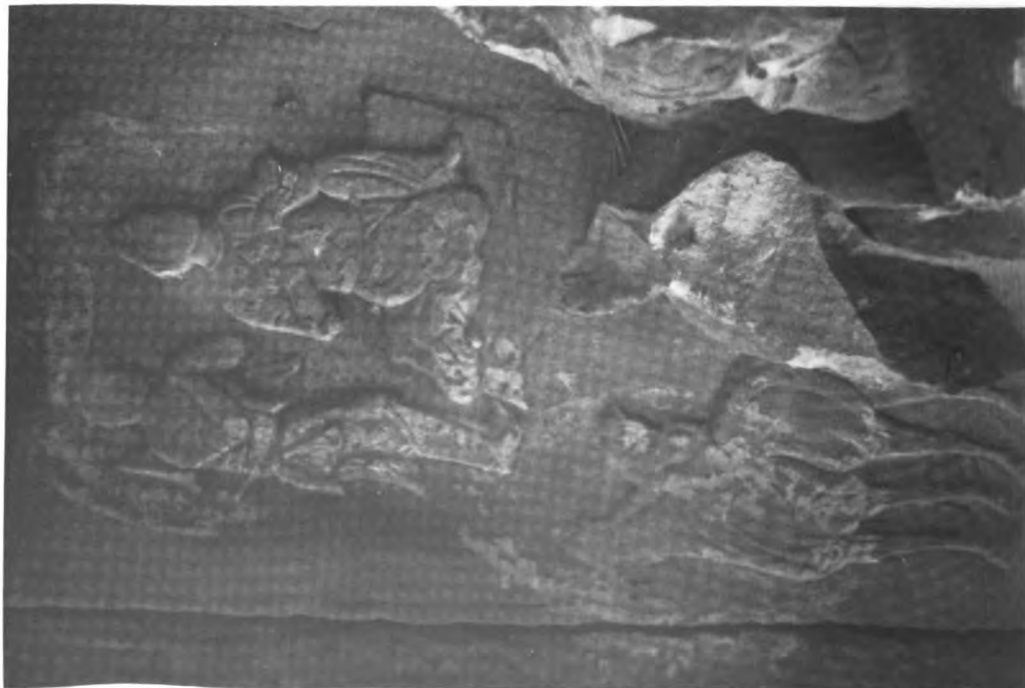


Plate 71







Plate 74



Plate 75





Plate 77



Plate 78

Plate 79-80



Plate 79



Plate 80

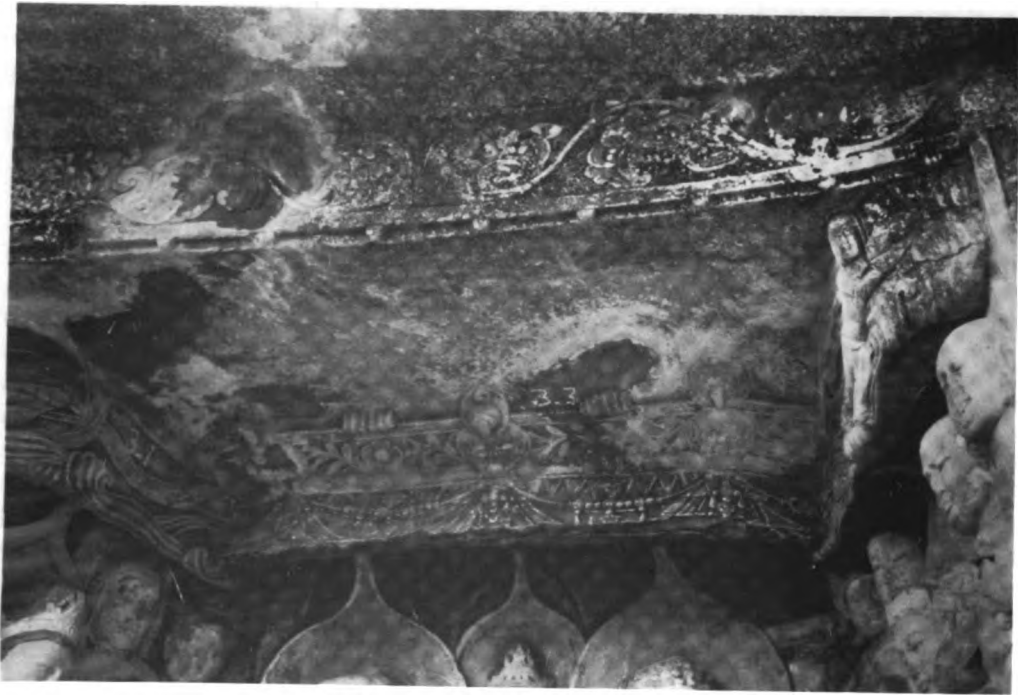


Plate 81



Plate 82



Plate 83



Plate 84



Plate 85



Plate 86



Plate 87



Plate 88



Plate 89



Plate 90



Plate 91

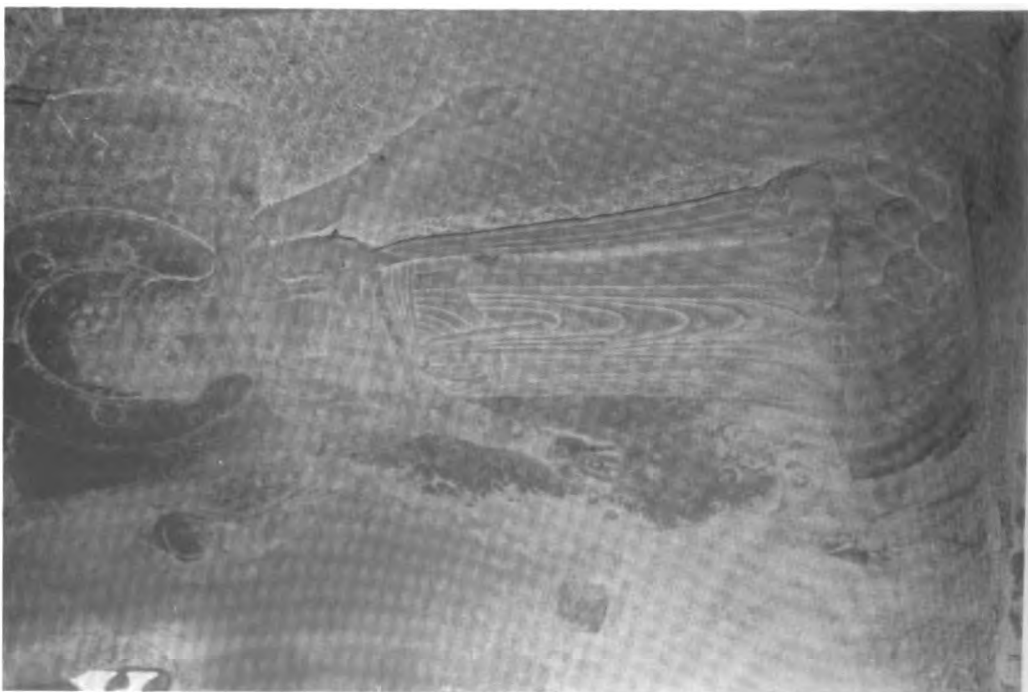


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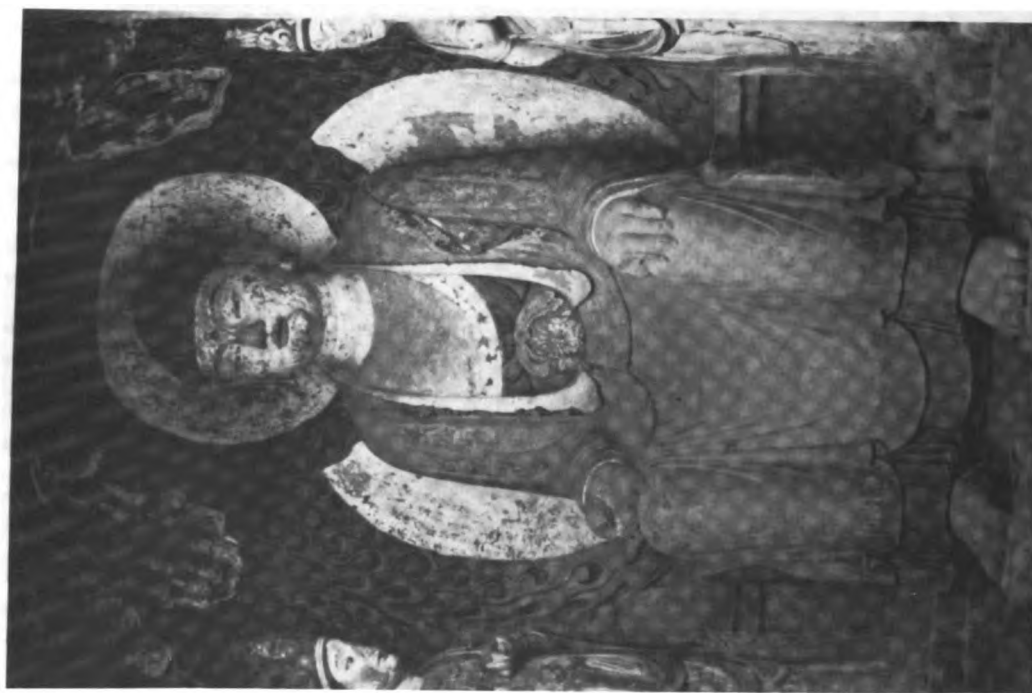
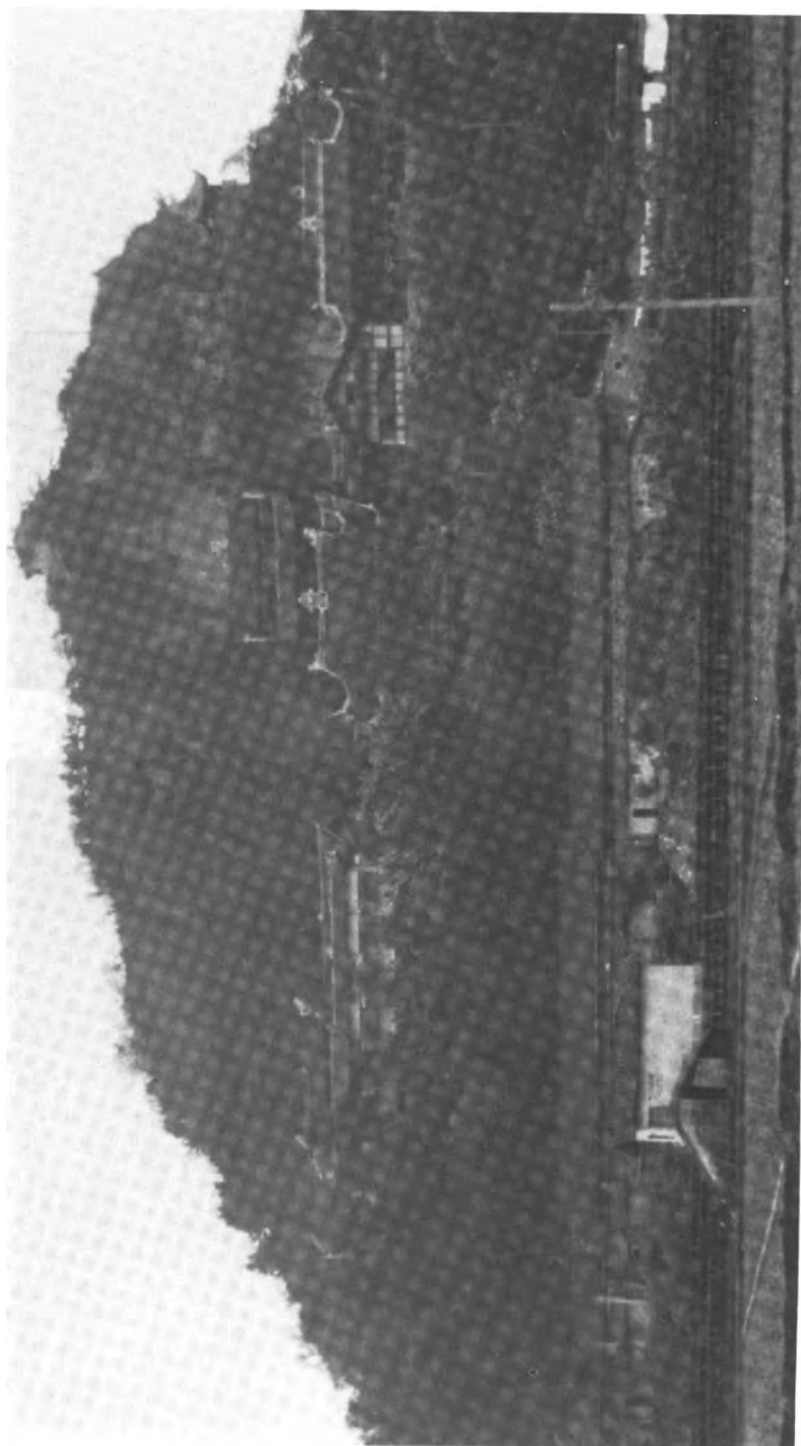


Plate 93



Plate 94





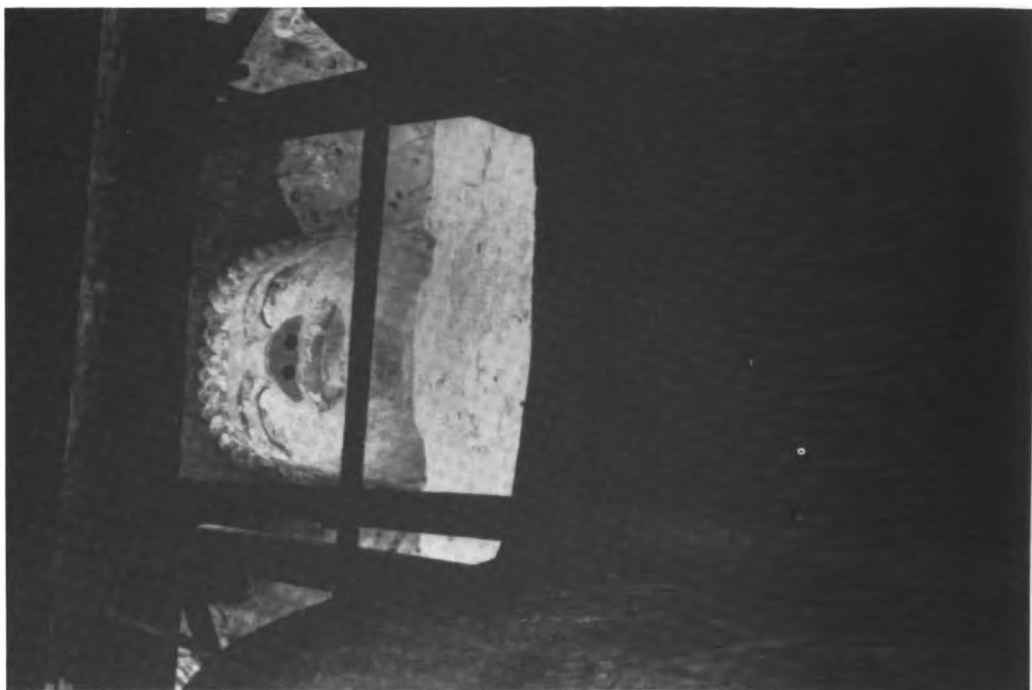


Plate 97



Plate 98



Plate 99

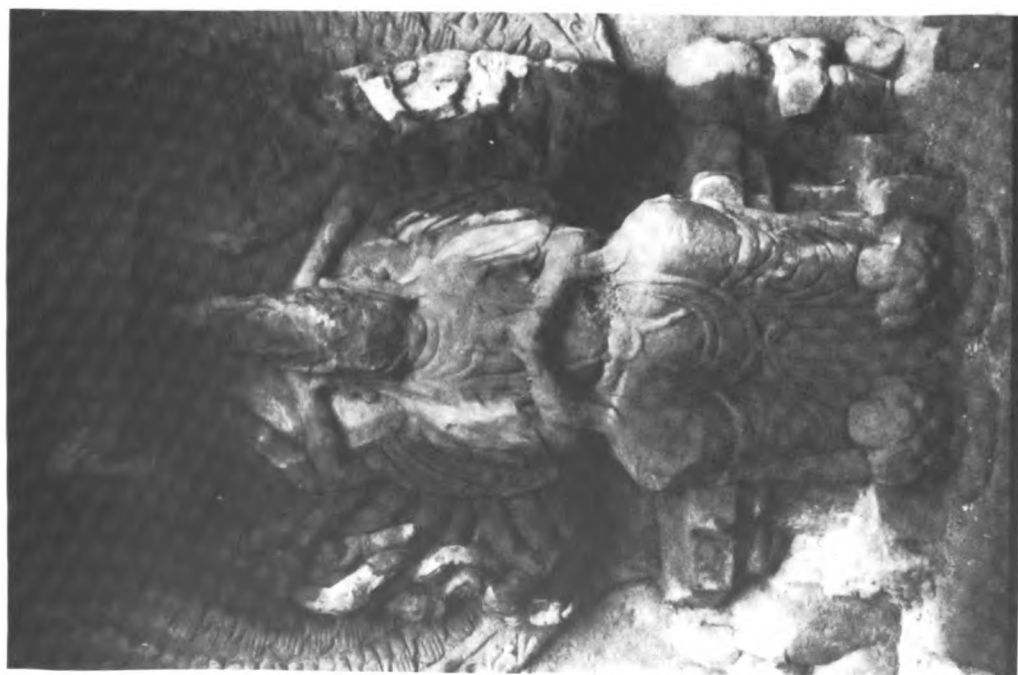


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Plate 101-102



Plate 101



Plate 102



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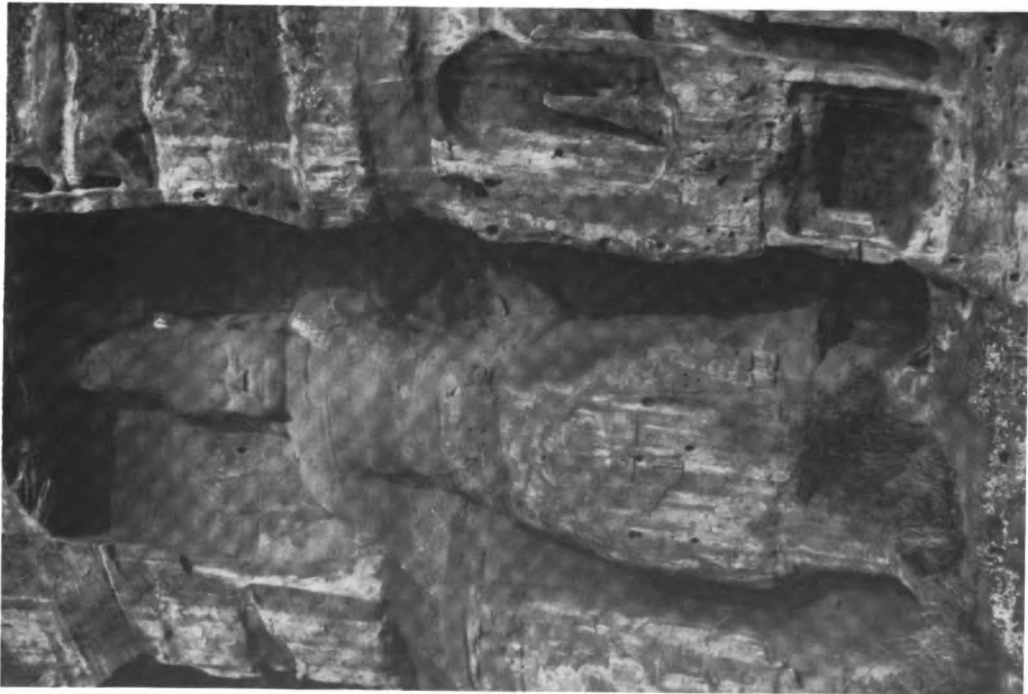


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Plate 105



Plate 106



Plate 107



Plate 108

Plate 109-110



Plate 109



Plate 110

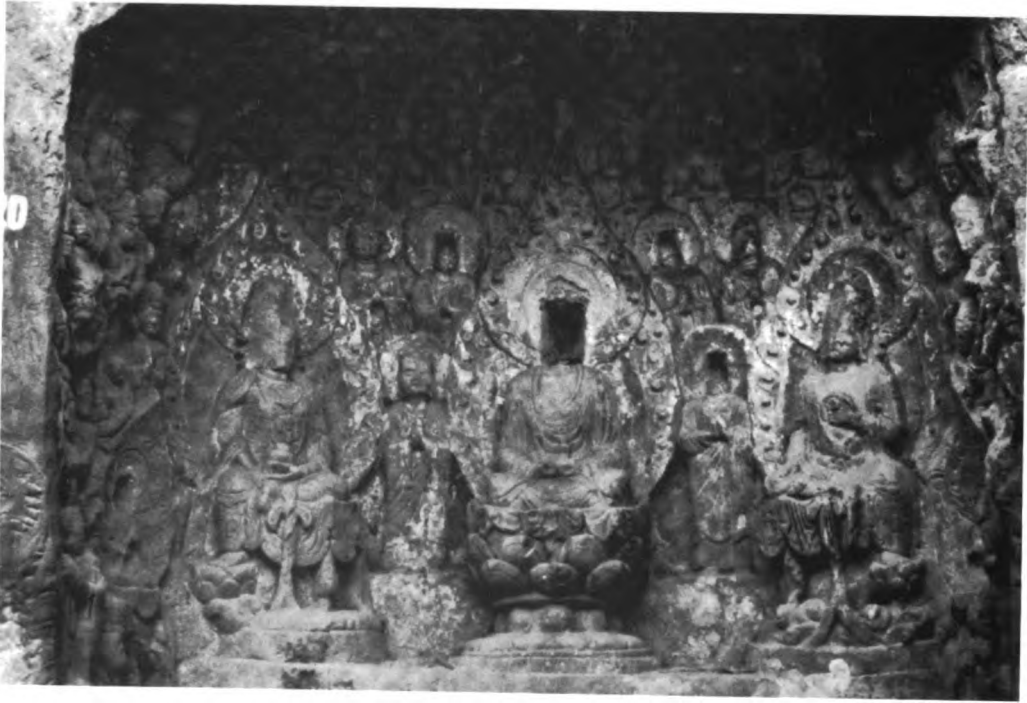


Plate 111



Plate 112

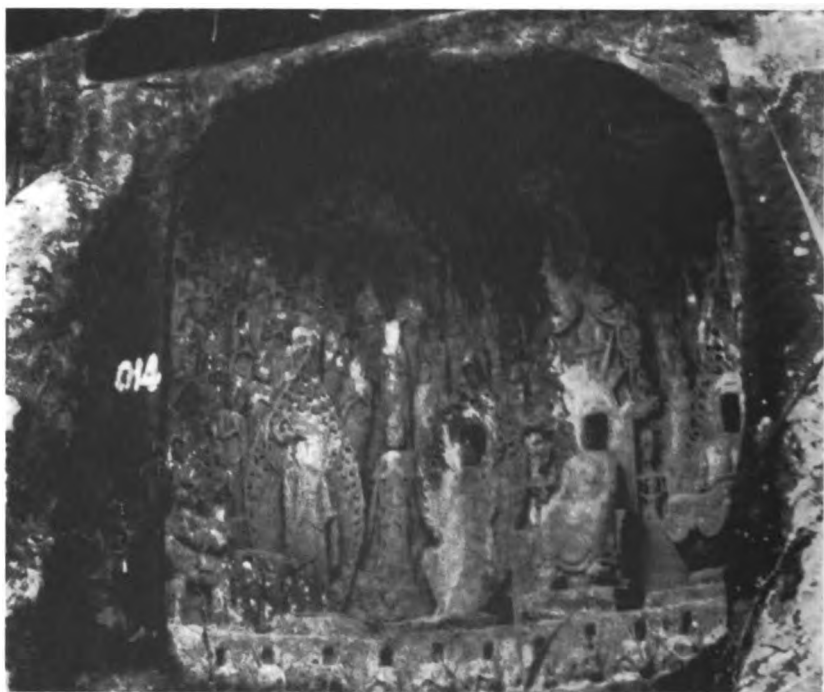


Plate 113



Plate 114



Plate 115



Plate 116

Plate 117-118



Plate 117



Plate 118



Plate 119



Plate 120



Plate 121



Plate 122





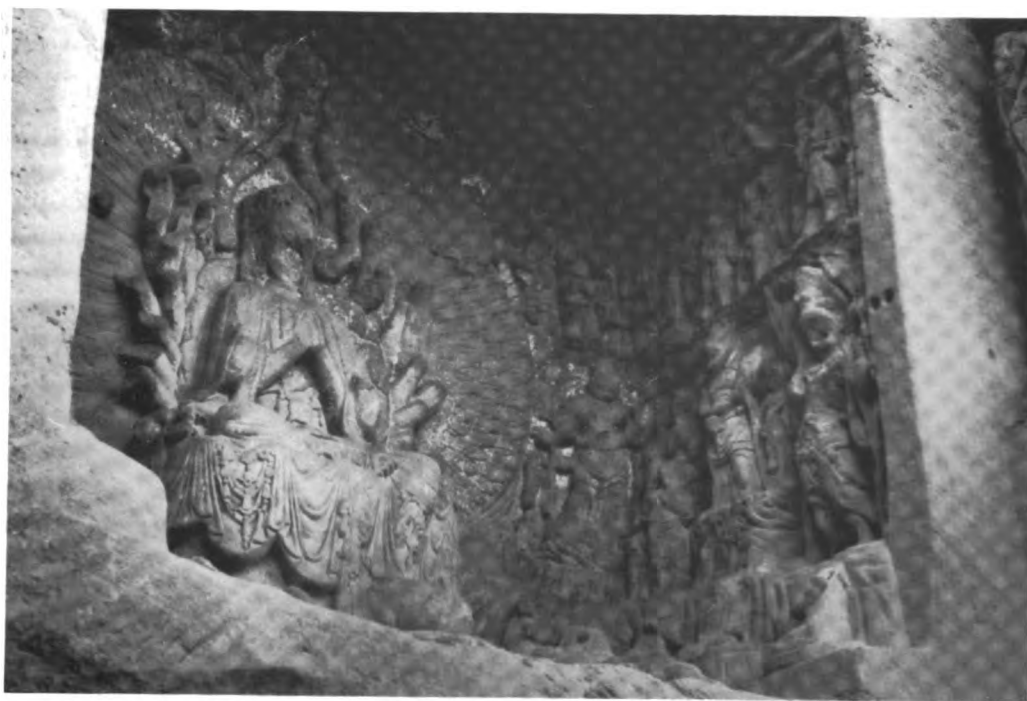


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Plate 126







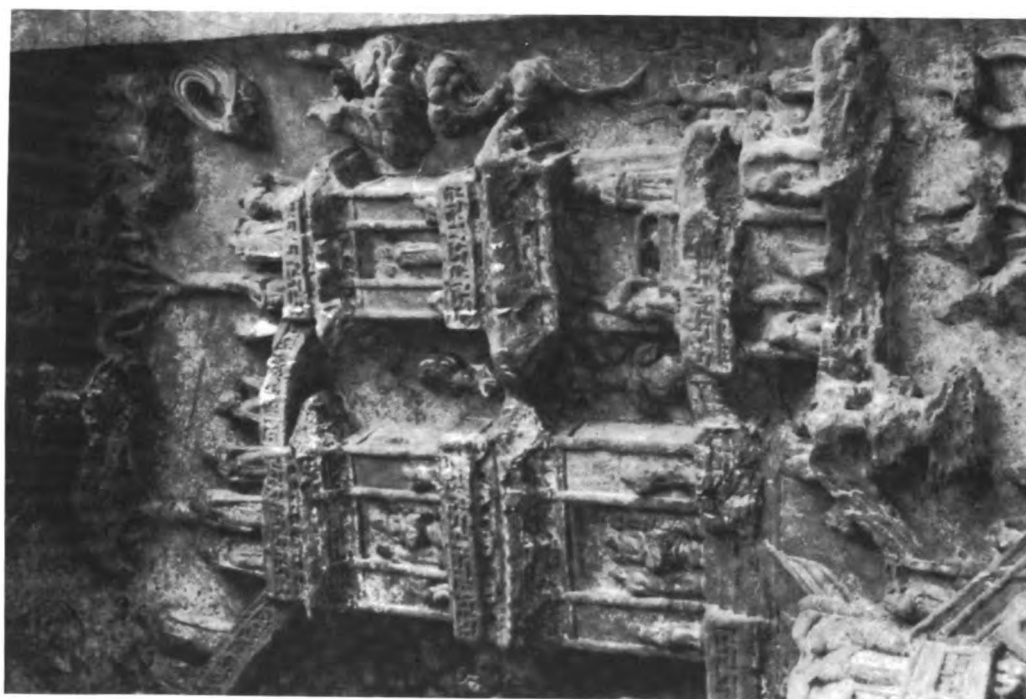


Plate 130



Plate 131



Plate 132



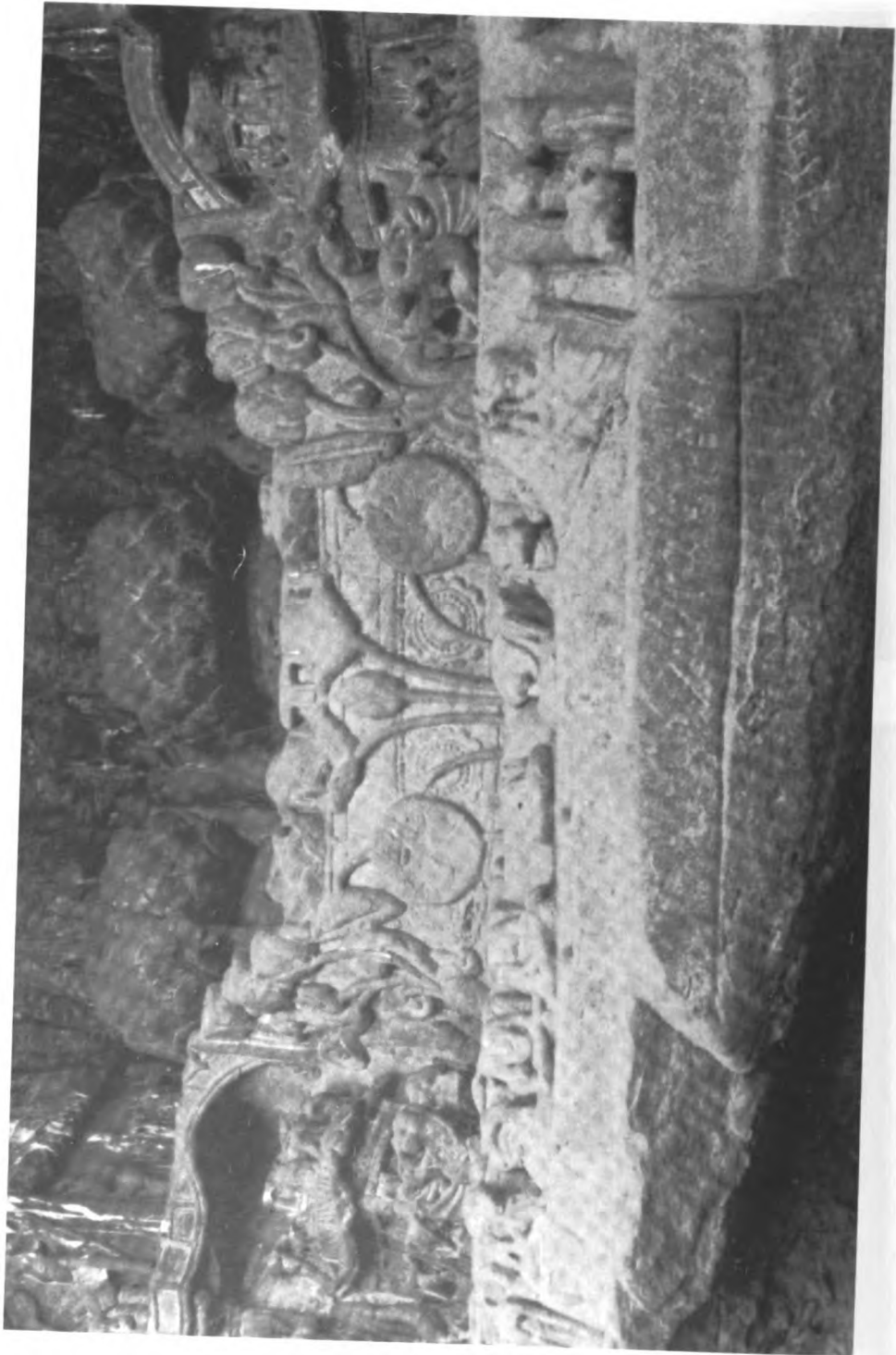
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Plate 135





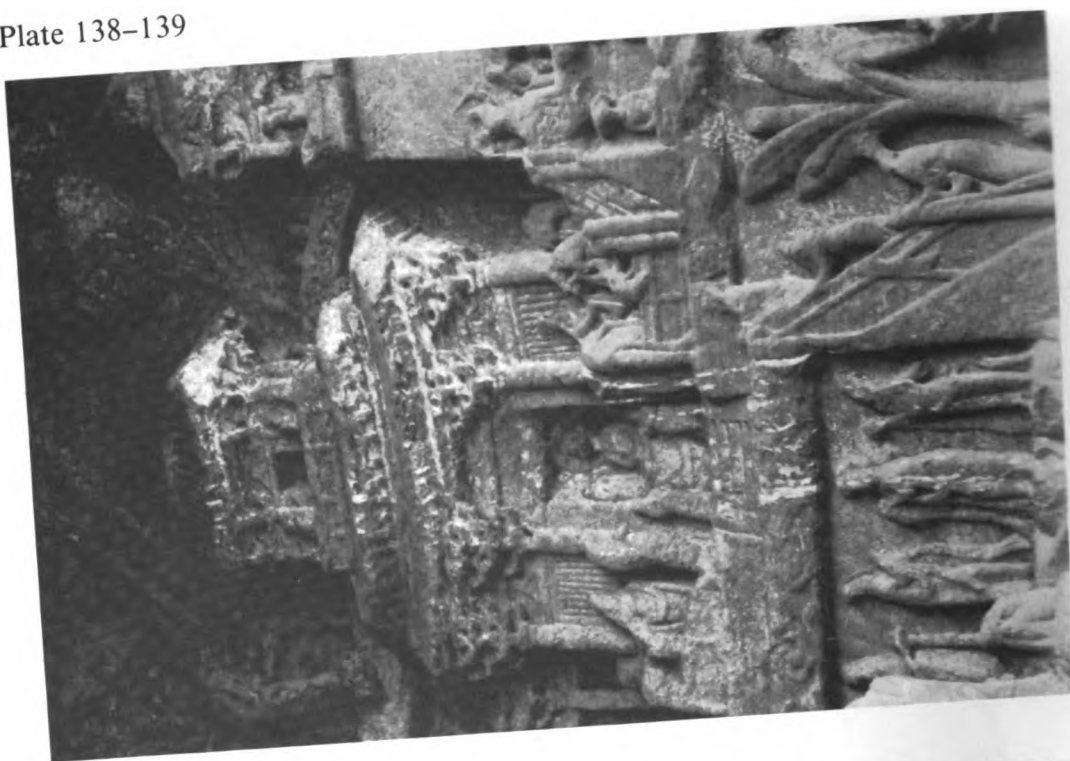


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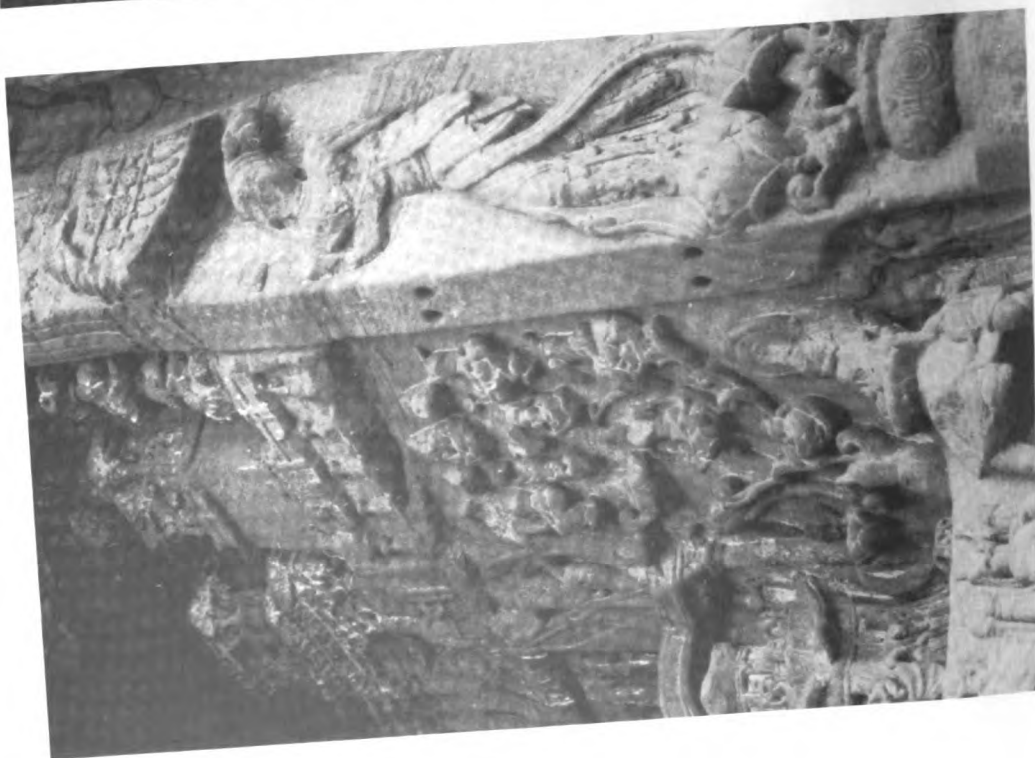


Plate 139



Plate 140



Plate 141

Plate 142-143



Plate 142



Plate 143

Dai Zhen's Evidential Commentary on the Meaning of the Words of Mencius

An annotated translation of the *Meng Zi ziyi shuzheng*

by

Torbjörn Lodén

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Translator's Preface

This translation was prepared as part of a project on Dai Zhen and the Social Dynamics of Confucianism, generously funded by the Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Foundation.¹

Dai Zhen (zi Dongyuan 1724–1777) considered his *Evidential Commentary on the Meaning of the Words of Mencius* as the *magnum opus* of his life.² Today it stands out as one of the major Chinese philosophical works of the 18th century. It was probably completed in 1776, the year before Dai Zhen's death, but was published only posthumously, first in the *Dai Shi yishu* (Remaining writings by Mr. Dai), included in the *Weiboxie congshu* which appeared in 1777–79.³

For my translation I have relied on the punctuated and annotated version included in a volume of Dai Zhen's philosophical writings prepared by a group of scholars in Hefei.⁴ This edition, which contains copious notes and translations into modern Chinese of many passages, has greatly facilitated the translation work, but I have also checked it against the edition collated by Mr. Tang Zhijun.⁵

The only complete translation of the Evidential Commentary that I know of is Yasuda Jirō's Japanese translation from 1948.⁶ However, parts of it have been rendered into Western languages, e.g. Wing-tsit Chan has translated several sections in his *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*. I have benefitted from the partial translations by Professor Chan and other scholars in preparing my own complete translation.

Some of the key terms in Dai Zhen's treatise seem to acquire meaning in the text rather than bring meaning to it. Some terms, e.g. *dao*, *li*, and *qi*, I therefore leave untranslated. One of Dai Zhen's main points is to define the meaning of *li* as referring to the structure and order of everything there is, i.e. *qi* or "material force", to use Wing-tsit Chan's translation.⁷ The word *xin* I render simply as "heart", rather than "mind-and-heart", hoping that as the reader proceeds through the text, the word "heart" will take on new connotations.

¹ This project has earlier resulted in my article "Dai Zhen and the Social Dynamics of Confucian Thought," in *The Stockholm Journal of East Asian Studies*, 1 (1988), pp. 26–53.

² See Duan Yucai, "Dai Dongyuan xiansheng nianpu", in *Dai Zhen wenji*, p. 241.

³ See Qian Mu, *Zhongguo jin sanbai nian xueshu shi*, p. 331 and Wang Mao, *Dai Zhen zhexue sixiang yanjiu*, p. 127.

⁴ See Anzhenghui, *Dai Zhen zhexue zhuzuo xuanzhu*, pp. 55–222.

⁵ See *Dai Zhen ji*, pp. 263–329.

⁶ Yasuda Jirō, tr., Tai Shin, *Mōshi jigi ryūshō*. I am grateful to Mr. Fumihiko Kamata of the National Diet Library in Tokyo for making a copy of this translation available to me.

⁷ See Wing-tsit Chan, "On Translating Certain Chinese Philosophical Terms."

And the Chinese word *tian* I translate in most cases simply as "heaven", trusting that the reader will discover that it often has the connotation "the natural world" or "natural".

In the translation Dai Zhen's own notes have been left in the main body of the text, printed in smaller size than the rest of the text – just as in old style Chinese books. My own notes are numbered consecutively within each chapter and are found at the bottom of each page where they occur.

Dai Zhen's treatise contains numerous references to older Chinese texts. In most cases I have translated their titles in the main body of the text, but the reader will find *pinyin* transcriptions of the Chinese titles in my notes. With the help of the bibliography which I have appended it should be possible to locate all titles referred to in the notes.

While working on this translation, I have benefitted from advice and comments from a number of scholars and friends. In particular, I would like to thank Professor Wang Mao in Hefei for spending many hours patiently explaining points in the text that I found difficult; Professor Mao Huaixin in Beijing for carefully checking an early draft of the translation; Professor Göran Malmqvist for his invaluable advice and suggestions; and my wife Lena Jönsson for her sound advice and moral support. It goes without saying that I assume full responsibility for the result.

Stockholm in November, 1988.
Torbjörn Lodén

Preface

When I was young I read the words of Mr. Duanmu in *The Analects*:

One can get to hear the Master's views on the classical writings, but one cannot get to hear his views on human nature and the *dao* of heaven.¹

Only when I read *The Book of Changes* did I realize that this is where [Confucius] discusses [human] nature and the *dao* of heaven. When the *dao* of the Zhou collapsed, the methods for bringing about order employed by Yao, Shun, Yu, Tang, Wen, Wu, and the Duke of Zhou, which are brilliantly spelt out in the classical writings, were abandoned as old remnants.² Since Confucius did not attain the position [of ruler] he could not hand them down as institutions, rites, and music. Therefore he radically rectified and traced the origin [of the prevailing institutions, rites, and forms of music], providing people with scales, as it were, or a compass and a square, a level and a plumb-line, for determining the causes of order and disorder during thousands of generations, and for determining which institutions, rites and forms of music should be perpetuated and which should be changed. His words appear lofty and far-reaching and must not be silenced. The words of Confucius in fact say things that earlier sages had not said. Whom can one hear them from besides Confucius? Therefore, [Zi Gong] says: "one cannot get to hear."

Later, some people who considered themselves wise while distorting the meaning [of Confucius' words] were also alarmed by the disorder of their time. Some of them used their *dao* to protect themselves and keep away from disasters; others used their *dao* to be able to guide men's hearts to be orderly and free from disorder. But their mistakes were fundamental; they held on to

¹ *Lunyu*, 5:12. *Wenzhang*, which I here render as "classical writings", is taken by Qian Mu (*Lunyu xinjie*, p. 158) and Yang Bojun (*Lunyu yizhu*, p. 47) to refer to ancient writings such as the *Shijing* and the *Shujing* which Confucius, in Chinese Kong Zi (551–479), often brings up in his conversations in the *Lunyu*. (Yang Bojun has numbered this paragraph 5:13). Zhu Xi defines *wenzhang* as "the outer manifestation of virtue" (*Sishu jizhu*, p. 104). Duanmu Ci, also known as Zi Gong, was a disciple of Confucius.

² The legendary sage rulers Yao, Shun, and Yu were considered in later tradition to have ruled in the 24th and 23rd centuries B.C. (See *Shiji*, *juan* 1; French translation by Chavannes in *Les Mémoires historiques de Se-ma Ts'ien*, *tome* 1). The historicity of these figures was disproven by Gu Jiegang in a series of articles in the early 20th century; see Laurence Schneider, *Ku Chieh-kang and China's New History*, pp. 223 ff. King Tang was the first King of the Shang dynasty (see *Shiji*, *juan* 3.) Wen and his two sons, Wu and the Duke of Zhou, are historical figures of the early Zhou dynasty, who have also been very important as paragons for later rulers to emulate. For a penetrating analysis of the qualities attributed to them, see H.G. Creel, *The Origins of Statecraft in China*, *passim*.

one [tenet of Confucius' views] while discarding a hundred. Even though their intentions were good, their words could only cause damage to *dao*, and so Mencius could not stop arguing with them.³ At that time everyone considered Mencius as someone who liked to argue. In Mencius' book there is the statement:

I understand words.⁴

And there is also the statement:

It is difficult for words to come up to the expectations of someone who has studied under a sage.⁵

Verbal errors are not confined to words but affect men's hearts, and when men are thus obscured, this will necessarily cause harm to [human] affairs and to the government.⁶ The harm that those who are regarded as "small men" cause in the world and to later generations is obvious and generally recognized. But when it comes to those who are regarded as "worthies, wise men, and gentlemen" and the harm they cause in the world and to later generations, people generally follow them and consider their words beautiful. The influence they exert on men's hearts is profound, and the damage they cause the people is great. But in the end no one realizes this. So how could one cease arguing?

Mencius argued with Yang [Zhu] and Mo [Zi], but men of later times were accustomed to the words of Yang, Mo, Lao [Zi], Zhuang [Zi], and Buddha and

³ Mencius, in Chinese Meng Zi, (ca 372–ca 289 B.C.)

⁴ *Meng Zi*, 2A:2; tr. Wing-tsit Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy* (hereafter cited as Chan, *A Source Book*), p. 63.

⁵ *Meng Zi*, 7A:24, tr. D.C. Lau, *Mencius*, p. 187.

⁶ The expression "cause harm to [human] affairs and the government" alludes to *Meng Zi*, 2A:2; cf. section 3.5.4 below. The word *shi*, which I here render as "[human] affairs", refers to "mundane events or facts of empirical experience" (Kenneth Ch'en, *Buddhism in China*, p. 66). In most instances in this text I render *shi* as "facts". The word "fact" has two basic meanings. First, it refers to "a thing done or performed" or "in a neutral sense: An action, deed, course of conduct" (*The Oxford English Dictionary*). This is also the meaning of *shi*: "*fan ren suo zuo suo wei zhe jie yue shi*" (anything that a man does or performs is called *shi*; *Zhongwen da cidian*, 244). Second, "fact" refers to "something that has really occurred or is really the case [...]" as opposed to what is merely inferred, or to a conjecture or fiction", or to "[t]hat which is of the nature of a fact; what has actually happened or is the case; truth attested by direct observation or authentic testimony; reality" (*The Oxford English Dictionary*). In Dai Zhen's usage *shi* also carries the connotation of something that has really happened or is really the case; it refers to events and activities in the empirical world of *qi*, and is thus opposed to the metaphysical world of *li*, which the Song Confucians postulated and which Dai Zhen considered fictitious. The compound *shiqing* in Dai Zhen's usage seems to emphasize this meaning of something that is really the case, and so I translate it as "matters of fact". Cf. Dai Zhen's discussion of *qing* in section 3.1.2 below.

so confused the words of Mencius with their words.⁷ This again is why someone who comes after Mencius cannot cease [arguing]. If I did not understand this, it would be all right [not to argue]. But to understand it and not say so – this would not be loyal, it would be to fail to live up to the teachings of the ancient worthies and sages, it would be to estrange oneself from humanity before humane men of later generations. Fearing this I have written the *Evidential Commentary on the Meaning of the Words of Mencius* in three chapters. Mr. Han Tuizhi said:

To follow the path of Yang, Mo, Lao, Zhuang, and Buddha in learning and wish to attain the *dao* of sages is like navigating in small isolated waters and hope to reach the sea. If you want to see the *dao* of the sages you must begin with Mencius.⁸

Alas, this is undoubtedly so!

Dai Zhen from Xiuning.

⁷ For Meng Zi's criticisms of Yang Zhu (440–360 B.C.?) and Mo Zi (fl. 479–438), see *Meng Zi*, 3A:5; 3B:9; 7A:26; 7B:26. We know of nothing with certainty about the person who wrote the book *Lao Zi*. The dating of this work is uncertain. Zhuang Zi lived some time between 399 and 295 B.C. I follow common practice and do not translate “Zi” – which is an honorific title meaning “Master” – when it is used with the names of pre-Qin thinkers, e.g. Xun Zi, Gao Zi, Mo Zi, Lao Zi, Zhuang Zi etc. When used with the names of later thinkers – e.g. Zhu Zi – I translate it as “Master”.

⁸ Han Tuizhi is another name for Han Yu (764–824). Quote from “Song Wang xiucai xu”, *Han Changli quanji*, juan 20.

Chapter 1

Li. Fifteen sections

1.1.¹

Li is a name referring to the examination and subtle analysis necessary to make distinctions. For this reason it is called the *li* of discrimination (*fenli*). In the case of the substance of things we speak about “*li* (fibres) in muscle” (*jili*), “*li* (fibres) in flesh” (*couli*), and “*li* (principles) in texts” (*wenli*).² This is also called “*wenlü*”, *li* and *lü* being semantic variants. When distinctions obtain, there will be order without confusion, and this is called “*tiaoli*” (order). Mencius said that Confucius brought together the great accomplishments [of earlier sages]. He said:

To initiate order is a matter of wisdom, to carry it through in an orderly fashion is a matter of sageness.³

It was precisely in the sense of attaining order that sageness and wisdom attained their height in Confucius. *The Book of Changes* says:

With the attainment of ease and simplicity *li* will prevail in the world.⁴

Since it is *qian* (heaven) and *kun* (earth) that are discussed, it is ease and simplicity, not humanity and wisdom, that are mentioned here. “Know

¹ Parts of this section have been translated by Chan, *A Source Book*, pp. 711–712, and I have drawn on his translation for my own.

² *Wenli* also means “pattern and order”. (See e.g. *Zhongyong*, 31; cf. below p. 9. In analogy with the meaning of *jili* and *couli*, I believe that *wenli* here first of all means “*li* in writing or in texts (*wen*)”. For another example of this meaning of *wenli*, cf. *Wenxin diaolong*, 3:1: “*Yi ji hu xingqing, ci yi jiang yu wenli*”.

³ *Meng Zi*, 5B:1.

⁴ *Yijing*, “Xici”, A. Dai Zhen holds that the *Yijing* identifies two complementary sets of aspects of *qi*:

<i>yang</i>	the male, active principle	<i>yin</i>	the feminine, preservative principle
<i>qian</i>	heaven, the active force	<i>kun</i>	earth, the preservative force
<i>‘yi</i>	ease	<i>jian</i>	simplicity
<i>ren</i>	humanity	<i>‘zhi</i>	wisdom

Basing himself on the *Yijing*, and especially on the chapter “Xici”, Dai Zhen argues that these aspects, when balanced, culminate in the realization of humanity and wisdom characteristic of the sage. Cf. Mao Huaixin, “Dai Zhen de ren zhi xueshuo.”

through the easy” means to know the oneness of humanity, love, justice, and altruism. “Accomplish through the simple” means to accomplish oneness by acting so that nothing seems to happen.⁵

He who attains this ease will be easily known. He who is easily known will have adherents. He who has adherents can continue long. To be able to continue long shows the virtue of the worthy.⁶

Someone who answers to this description is a man of humanity.

He who attains this simplicity will be easily followed. He who is easily followed will achieve success. He who achieves success can become great. To be able to become great is the heritage of the worthy.⁷

Someone who answers to this description is a man of wisdom. When matters of fact in the world are distinct in their order and clear in their details, and when you respond to them with both humanity and wisdom – can there then be the slightest error? *The Doctrine of the Mean* says:

Pattern, order (*li*), refinement and penetration enable him [the perfect sage] to exercise discrimination.⁸

“The Record of Music” says:

Music is [the sound of the human heart] interrelated with the *li* of human relations.⁹

In his annotation Zheng Kangcheng says:

Li means to discriminate.¹⁰

In his postface to the *Shuowen jiezi* (Explanations of Simple Graphs and Analyses of Compound Characters), Xu Shuzhong says:

⁵ *Yijing*, “Xici”, A.

⁶ *Ibid.* In the original the order of the phrases of this and the following quotations is different in that the first phrase of the first quotation is followed by the first phrase of the second quotation, the second phrase of the first quotation is followed by the second phrase of the second quotation etc. Cf *SSJZS*, p. 76.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Zhongyong*, 31; tr. Chan, *A Source Book*, p. 712.

⁹ “Yueji”, 1:7; tr. Chan, *A Source Book*, p. 712 mod. “Yueji” is included in the *Liji*; see *SSJZS*, *juan* 37–39.

¹⁰ Zheng Kangcheng, other name for Zhen Xuan (127–200). For his annotation, see *SSJZS*, p. 1528.

[The Yellow Emperor's scribe Cang Jie saw the traces of birds and beasts and] realized that their *li* of discrimination could be distinguished.¹¹

What people in ancient times understood as *li* was never the same as that which later Confucians have called *li*.

¹¹ Xu Shuzhong, other name for Xu Shen (1st–2nd century A.D.). This postface has been translated in its entirety by Göran Malmqvist; see “Xu Shen’s Postface to the Shuo Wen Jie Zi.”

1.2.¹²

Question: What did people in ancient times mean when they spoke about heavenly *li*?

Answer: *Li* refers to feelings that do not err. *Li* can never be realized when feelings are not realized. Whenever you do something to others, you should examine yourself and think quietly: would I be able to accept this, if another person did it to me? Whenever you demand something from others, you should examine yourself and think quietly: if another person demanded this from me, would I then be able to meet his demand?¹³ When the measure of the self is applied to others, *li* will become clear. That which is called heavenly *li* refers to the natural *li* of discrimination. Using the natural *li* of discrimination you can measure the feelings of others in terms of your own,¹⁴ and then there will be no injustice or imbalance.

“The Record of Music” says:

To be quiescent at birth: this is heavenly nature. To move when stirred by external objects: this is the desire of nature. Encountering external objects the intellect will gain knowledge, and then likes and dislikes will be formed therefrom. If likes and dislikes are not controlled from within and the intellect becomes enticed by the external world, so that self-examination is not possible, then heavenly *li* will be extinguished.¹⁵

“Extinguished” means “submerged out of sight”. It also says:

Man is stirred by external objects without end, and when his likes and dislikes are not controlled, he will change as a result of his encounter with objects. To be so changed by objects is to extinguish heavenly *li* and to indulge human desires without restraint. Then the heart will be rebellious and deceitful, and licentiousness and rebellion will ensue. For this reason the strong will bully the weak, the multitude oppress the few, the knowledgeable deceive the ignorant, the bold make it bitter for the timid. The sick will not be treated, and the old, young and lonely will not receive the care they deserve. This is the way to great disorder.¹⁶

¹² Parts of this section have been translated by Chan in *A Source Book*, pp. 712–713, and I have drawn on his translation for my own.

¹³ The Chinese word which I here render as “demand” is *bze*. Chan translates it as “give some responsibility to others”, whereas Anzhenghui takes it as *zebei*, “blame” (p. 64). I am indebted to Professor Wang Mao in Hefei for pointing out to me the meaning of *bze* in this context.

¹⁴ This concept – *xie* – is given prominence in the *Daxue*, chapter 10.

¹⁵ “Yueji”, 1:11. For the translation of this passage I have drawn on Derk Bodde’s translation of Fung Yu-lan, *A History of Chinese Philosophy*, vol. 1, p. 342; on Couvreur, *Liki*, vol. 2, p. 52; and on Legge, *The Sacred Books of China*, IV, p. 96.

If you truly put yourself in the position of the weak, the few, the ignorant, the timid, or of the sick, old, young, and lonely and think about their feelings – are other people really different from yourself?

Thus, as man is quiescent and not yet stirred by objects, his blood and *qi* and his mental faculty are unagitated, and he cannot err.¹⁷ Yang Xiong's *Fangyan* (Local words) says: "Unagitated" [*zhan*] means 'tranquil' [*an*]", and Guo Pu's annotation says: "Unagitated" [*zhanran*] means 'tranquil appearance' [*anmao*]."¹⁸ Thus, this is called heavenly nature. When a man becomes stirred, desires will issue from his nature. The desires of one man are desires that are common to all men in the world, and so they are called "desires of nature". When a man's likes and dislikes have been formed and he follows these, while forgetting the likes and dislikes of others, he will often do harm to others to indulge his own desires. To examine yourself means to consider what it would feel like to be the object [of others indulging their desires]. That somebody's feelings are balanced and just means that his likes and dislikes are controlled and in accordance with heavenly *li*. Zhuang Zi relates how Lord Wenhui's cook cut up a bullock saying: "In accordance with heavenly *li* I strike in the big hollows, guide the knife through the big openings, and follow things as they are. So I never touch the smallest ligament or tendon, much less a main joint." Heavenly *li* is what is meant when he said: "There are spaces between the joints, and the blade of the knife has really no thickness. If you insert what has no thickness into such spaces, then there is plenty of room." This is just like the natural *li* of discrimination.¹⁹ What people in ancient times understood as *li* was never the same as that which later Confucians have called *li*.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 1:12; for the translation of this passage I draw on Courvreur, *op.cit.*, p. 53 and on Legge, *op.cit.*, pp. 96–07.

¹⁷ "Blood and *qi*" refers to the body as opposed to the mental faculty. For a discussion of these concepts, see Manfred Porkert, *The Theoretical Foundations of Chinese Medicine: Systems of Correspondence*, pp. 185 f.

¹⁸ Yang Xiong (53 B.C.–A.D. 18), author of *Fangyan*, a work which Guo Pu (276–324) annotated.

¹⁹ Quotation from Zhuang Zi, "Yangsheng zhu"; tr. Burton Watson, *The complete Works of Chuang Tzu*, p. 51 mod. It is surprising that Dai Zhen refers to Zhuang Zi for the true meaning of "heavenly *li*", since he will argue (e.g. in section 1.15 below) that Zhu Xi's and other Neo-Confucians' misinterpretation of this concept was due to influence from Lao Zi, Zhuang Zi, and the Buddhists.

1.3²⁰

Question: If you unerringly use your own feelings to measure the feelings of others, you will surely be in accord with *li* in your deeds. What is the difference between the words feeling and *li*?

Answer: No matter whether in yourself or in others they are called feelings. Feelings which are neither excessive nor deficient are called *li*. *The Book of Odes* says:

Heaven gives birth to the multitude of people, and where there is a thing (*wu*) there is a law (*ze*). People hold on to the constant norms, they love that beautiful virtue.²¹

Confucius says:

The writer of this poem must have known *dao*.²²

Mencius elaborated on the poem and said:

Thus, where there is a thing there is a law. People hold on to the constant norms, and therefore they love that beautiful virtue.²³

The law is to hold on [to the constant norms] as the standard; *li* is to be in accord with the distinctions in each case; and beautiful virtue is to demonstrate this in words and deeds. A thing is a fact. When we talk about a fact, we do not go beyond daily matters as drinking and eating. To neglect these and talk about *li* is not what the ancient worthies and sages meant when they talked about *li*.

²⁰ This section has been translated in its entirety by Chan in *A Source Book*, p. 713, and I have drawn on his translation for my own.

²¹ Ode 260. For my translation I have consulted Karlgren, *The Book of Odes*, p. 228; D.C. Lau, *Mencius*, p. 163; and Waley *The Book of Songs*, p. 141. Karlgren renders the last two lines: "that the people hold on to the norms./is because they love that beautiful virtue." This interpretation may be correct, but from Mencius' comment (*Meng Zi*, 6A:6) it seems clear that in his view "the love of that beautiful virtue" is the result of "holding on to the constant norms".

²² *Meng Zi*, 6A:6, tr. Lau, *Mencius*, p. 163 mod.

²³ *Ibid.*

1.4.

Question: Mencius says:

That which all hearts approve of is called *li* and righteousness. The sages were only first to grasp that which all hearts approve of.²⁴

How is it that this *li* can be discussed in terms of the heart?

Answer: Only that which all hearts approve of is called *li* and righteousness. So that which has not reached the level of being approved by all and only exists as somebody's opinion is neither *li* nor righteousness. Anything which men approve of and which has been called unchangeable by ten thousand generations in the world is what is meant by "all approve of". [Mencius] brings up *li* to show that the heart can make distinctions, and [he] brings up righteousness to show that the heart can make judgments. Making distinctions, everything has its unchangeable law and this is called *li*; to act in accordance with this is called righteousness. Therefore, to understand *li* is to understand distinctions, and to fully understand righteousness is to know how to make judgments. Not understanding [*li*], you will often find yourself in doubt and become confused; not understanding *dao*, you will often get entangled in selfishness and cause harm to *dao*. – This is to seek *li* and righteousness with insufficient wisdom and thus cannot be called *li* and righteousness. Of those who are not sages few are free from obscurity; the obscurity may be deep or it may be shallow.²⁵ A man can have no greater fault than consider himself wise although he is obscured, [that is] to give free rein to his [subjective] opinions and hold on to them as if they constituted *li*

²⁴ *Meng Zi*, 6A:7. Dai Zhen has slightly altered the wording. The first part reads in the original: *xin zhi suo tong ran zhe, he ye? Wei li ye, yi ye*. Dai Zhen simplifies: *xin zhi suo tong ran zhe wei li ye, yi ye*. D.C. Lau translates *xin zhi suo tong ran* as "common to all hearts". (*Mencius*, p. 164) Yang Bojun's interpretation is similar: "*xin de xiangtong zhi chu*". (*Meng Zi yizhu*, p. 262.) With this interpretation *li* easily becomes something "embodied in the heart", which is precisely the view that Dai Zhen is out to refute. The translation "that which all hearts approve of" must be closer to Dai Zhen's interpretation, and this also seems to be a reasonable interpretation of Meng Zi's original. The last sentence of 6A:7 reads: "Thus, *li* and righteousness please my heart just as meat pleases my mouth." If pleasing to the heart, how can then *li* itself be common to all hearts? It is the love of *li* that is common to all hearts, and *li* is that which all hearts approve of.

²⁵ In Burton Watson's words, this term – *bi* – "denotes [...] a clouding or darkening of the faculties or the understanding" (*Hsün Tzu. Basic Writings*, p. 121). As a philosophical term it gained prominence through its use in the *Xun Zi*. In his translation of this work Burton Watson renders it into English as "obsession", since this "seems to come closest to expressing Hsün Tzu's meaning" (*ibid*). Derk Bodde uses "delusion". (See Fung Yu-lan, *A History of Chinese Philosophy*, vol. 2, p. 666.) Chung-ying Cheng in his translation of Dai Zhen's *Yuanshan* uses "becloud", which is a good translation but unfortunately cannot be used as a noun. (Cf. Chung-ying Cheng, *Tai Chen's Inquiry into Goodness, passim*.) "Obscuration" I have borrowed from Wing-tsit Chan; see e.g. *A Source Book*, p. 714.

and righteousness. I am afraid that those who seek *li* and righteousness take these to be represented by their opinions – who knows the end of the calamities that this will cause the people?

1.5.

Question: Confucian writings since the Song take *li* as if it were a thing, received from heaven and embodied in the heart. *The Recorded Conversations with Master Zhu* says: "If there is no heart, *li* has no place to dwell."²⁶ It also says: "Every creature has a heart in which there is necessarily a vacuity. [...] Such is man's heart too, but it is also the vacuity in his heart that contains numerous *daoli* [...] If we widen the perspective to include everything in heaven and on earth there is nothing which does not depend on this (*mo bu you ci*). Is it not this that constitutes the wonder of man's heart? When *li* rests in man's heart, it is called nature. The heart is the abode of the spiritual enlightenment and the ruler of the whole self. Nature is [made up of] these several *daoli* received from heaven and embodied in the heart."²⁷ Now you explain [the meaning of the words of] Mencius and say that anything which men approve of and which has been called unchangeable by ten thousand generations in the world is what is meant by "all approve of"; and [you say that] this enlightenment of the heart, which does not err when applied to matters of fact, and which makes feelings neither excessive nor deficient, is what is meant by *li*. This is not as if it were a thing embodied in the heart. You also say that what has not reached the level of being approved by all and only exists as somebody's opinion cannot be called *li* and righteousness.²⁸ When Mencius said that the sages were first to grasp that which all hearts approve of, he certainly did not lightly ascribe this ability to others; no one before the sages had grasped *li*. But among men there is no one who does not have a family, and then there are the affairs of the country and of the world. How can we wait for sages to deal with these?

Answer: In the Six Classics and the sayings of Confucius and Mencius, as well as in commentaries and chronicles, the word *li* seldom appears. But now even the most stupid people, acting in a perverse and unbridled manner, invariably invoke *li* when they deal with a matter or take somebody to task. Since the Song this has become so habitual that *li* is taken as if it were a thing received from heaven and embodied in the heart. Thus the opinions of the heart are considered to be *li*. As a result, glib-tongued people with status and influence find support in *li*, whereas for people who cannot speak for themselves and who have no power or status, *li* is of no help. Alas, who can say that this is not

²⁶ See *Zhu Zi yulei*, juan 5, p. 137.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, juan 98. The meaning of *mo bu you ci* is not entirely clear. J.P. Bruce, who has translated this passage, renders this phrase as "there is nothing that does not have its origin here". (*The Philosophy of Human Nature*, p. 237). I prefer "there is nothing [...] which does not depend on this" as philosophically more plausible. Cf. *you tian bu you ren* which is current in modern usage. The meaning of "spiritual enlightenment" (*shenming*) often seems close to "intelligence".

²⁸ See section 1.4. above.

how *li* is used in dealing with matters and with people? Somebody may well preserve his honesty and harbour no selfish desires; he may, when it comes to dealing with some matter or taking somebody to task, rely on his own opinions while upholding what he thinks is right and discarding what he thinks is wrong; and he may, confident of his own seriousness and upright character, hate evil as his enemy. But if he does not realize how difficult it is to know matters of fact and how easily one's judgment of right and wrong may err in partiality, then this will often bring calamity to others, although he himself may never in his whole life realize this, or he may not become aware of it until afterwards and then regret that he has not lived up to [what is right and proper]. Alas, who can say that this is not how *li* is used in dealing with matters and in ruling men?

There are few wise but many stupid people in the world. Those with a mental faculty brighter than that of the common people are universally esteemed as wise, and yet they are far from sages. If the common people are compared to those universally esteemed by these as wise men with regard to their grasp of *li*, then the common people necessarily turn out to be more obscured. But if those universally esteemed by the common people as wise men are compared to sages with regard to their grasp of *li*, then only those who have become sages turn out to be unobscured. Whenever something occurs and the heart responds, the judgment of the heart is invariably said to be equivalent to *li*. But the worthies and sages in ancient times never understood *li* in this way. And not only the worthies and sages in ancient times did not understand *li* in this way; people in the past differed from the people of today, who speak about *li* as soon as they open their mouths, and also did not consider this [opinions] to be *li*. In the past people knew that you cannot call opinions *li*, but this is just what people today lightly do. Among those who take *li* as if it were a thing received from heaven and embodied in the heart, there is no one who does not consider opinions to be *li*. Now if people give free rein to their opinions, they will fail [to grasp *li*], but if they seek *qing* (facts, feelings) they will grasp *li*.²⁹ Zi Gong asked:

Is there a single word which can be a guide to conduct throughout one's life?³⁰

²⁹ Dai Zhen here seems to make use of the double meaning of *qing* – “factual circumstances” and “feelings” respectively – for persuasive purposes. On the one hand he has tried to convince us that *li* refers to the structure of the objective world. (Section 1.1.) On the other hand he has argued that it is right to follow one's feelings and desires as long as they do not conflict with the feelings and desires of others; that one acts in accordance with *li* if and only if he follows what is “approved by all hearts”. (Section 1.2.) By asserting that *li* must be sought in *qing*, which denotes objective facts as well as feelings, the distinction between these two tenets of Dai Zhen's thought becomes blurred. In this section I leave the word *qing* untranslated and add in parenthesis the meaning or the meanings I believe it carries in each respective case.

³⁰ *Lunyu*, 15:23; tr. D.C. Lau, *The Analects*, p. 135.

The Master answered:

It is perhaps the word *shu* (altruism). Do not impose on others what you yourself do not desire.³¹

In discussing how order should be brought about in the country and peace in the world, *The Great Learning* says with regard to [the proper behaviour] between men of humble and exalted status:

What a man dislikes in his superiors, let him not show it in dealing with his juniors; what he dislikes in his inferiors, let him not show it in the service of his superiors.³²

With regard to [the proper behaviour towards] one's seniors and juniors, it says:

What a man dislikes in those in front of him, let him not show it in preceding those who are behind; what he dislikes in those behind him, let him not show it in following those in front of him.³³

And with regard to [the proper behaviour towards people] of equal status as oneself, it says:

What a man dislikes in those on his right, let him not apply it to those on his left; and what he dislikes in those on his left, let him not apply it to those on his right.³⁴

“What you yourself do not desire” and “what a man dislikes” – these are nothing but [expressions of] man's constant *qing* (feelings). Though *li* is not explicitly referred to, its meaning is here fully explained. Only by measuring one's own *qing* (feelings) against the feelings of others is it possible to deal with a matter not using opinions springing from the heart. If you seek *li* while discarding *qing* (feelings, facts), then what you call *li* will always be opinions. Giving free rein to one's opinions will necessarily bring calamities to the people.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *Daxue*, 10; tr.Chan, *A Source Book*, p. 92 mod.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*

1.6.

Question: Since the Song no one has dared to refute the view of opinions as *li*. The reason for this is that *li* is said to exist in your heart. Now you say that *li* exists in matters of fact (*shiqing*) and consists of that which all hearts approve of. This is undoubtedly so. Mencius used the concept of *li* to show the goodness of human nature. Could you please tell us about this doctrine?

Answer: Mencius says:

All mouths have the same preference in taste, all ears in sound, all eyes in colour. Is there with regard to the hearts only nothing which they all approve of?³⁵

He makes clear that according to human nature *li* and righteousness are agreeable to the heart just as taste is agreeable to the mouth, sound to the ear, and colour to the eye. Taste, sound, and colour exist in objects but come into contact with our blood and *qi*. *Li* and righteousness exist in facts but come into contact with our mental faculty. Man's blood and *qi* and his mental faculty have their definite functions: the mouth can discern taste, the ears sound, the eyes colour, whereas the heart can discern *li* and righteousness. Taste, sound, and colour exist in objects, not in ourselves, but when they come into contact with our blood and *qi* we are able to discern them and take pleasure in them. Those we take pleasure in are bound to be the ones that are particularly excellent. *Li* and righteousness are to be found through a careful and detailed analysis of matters of fact, but when they come into contact with our mental faculty we are able to discern them and take pleasure in them. Those we take pleasure in are bound to be the ones that are supremely right. Zi Chan says:

What is first formed when man is born is called *po* (animal soul). After *po* is born, the *yang* [aspect of the soul] is called *hun* (spiritual soul).³⁶

Zeng Zi says:

The refined *qi* of *yang* is called *shen* (spirit), and the refined *qi* of *yin* is called *ling* (soul). *Shen* and *ling* are the roots of the different objects.³⁷

³⁵ Meng Zi, 6A:7.

³⁶ Zuo-zhuan, "Zhao Gong", 7th year; see SSJZS, p. 2050.

³⁷ Quotation from "Tianyuan", a text attributed to Zeng Zi and included in the *Da Dai Liji*. For a German translation see Wilhelm, *Li Gi. Das Buch der Sitte der älteren und jüngeren Dai*, pp. 126–133.

Thus, the ability of the ear to hear, the eye to see, the nose to smell, the mouth to taste – these are all functions of *po* (the animal soul), which is what is called *ling* (the soul), *yin* being in charge of perception. The refinement of the heart, which makes thinking and understanding possible, is the function of *hun* (the spiritual soul), which is what is called *shen* (the spirit), *yang* being in charge of expansion. To be in charge of expansion is to judge and decide, to be in charge of perception is to obey. Thus Mencius says:

The ear and the eye are organs unable to think. [...] the heart is an organ that can think.³⁸

Thinking is the ability of the heart. Refinement is at times obscured, and when it reaches the level where there is no obscuration and everything can be understood, it is called spiritual enlightenment.

Any species of blood and *qi* possesses refinement, but the degree of the heart's refinement may vary. It is like a flame illuminating an object: if the flame is weak, it can only illuminate objects at a short distance. As for objects which the light can illuminate, there will be no mistake [in perception], but when an object cannot be illuminated, uncertainty and mistakes will ensue. When no mistake is made, we can say that *li* is grasped. If the flame is stronger, it can illuminate objects at a greater distance, and then *li* is often grasped and seldom missed. Besides, it is not only a question of distance. Whether the light can illuminate an object also depends on how dark the object is. So some objects can be examined, others not. When an object may be examined, we fully know its substance. But when an object cannot be examined, uncertainty and mistakes will ensue; being uncertain and making mistakes is what is meant by missing *li*. To miss *li* is caused by the darkness of your physical substance, and this is what we call stupidity. Only through study can you remedy this insufficiency, advance and attain wisdom and so improve incessantly until you reach your maximum. Then your brightness will equal the sun and the moon, your light reaching everywhere, and you will be a sage. This is what is meant when it says in *The Doctrine of the Mean*, "though stupid you will surely become enlightened" and when Mencius says that he is called a sage who "(extends and brings to completion:) develops [the four beginnings]".³⁹ With spiritual enlightenment at its height, the *li* of every fact will be grasped, and humanity, righteousness, propriety, and wisdom will all be complete. Thus, *li* and righteousness are nothing but illuminations and examinations which do not err. Why is it that they do not err? – It is thanks to the spiritual enlightenment of the heart. What distinguishes man from animals,

³⁸ *Meng Zi*, 6A:15.

³⁹ *Zhongyong*, 20 and *Meng Zi*, 2A:6.

notwithstanding the refinement that they have in common, is man's capacity to advance and attain spiritual enligthenment. Are *li* and righteousness really like separate objects to be sought beyond what is illuminated and examined? Is the spiritual enlightenment that man may attain really to be sought beyond his physical endowment?

1.7.

Question: Later Confucians have held that sensual desires emanate from man's physical endowment, whereas *li* is separate from his physical endowment. Now you say that the refinement of the heart may be developed through study, so that man may develop and attain spiritual enlightenment, and then he will grasp the *li* of all facts. This is to say that it is wrong to seek *li* beyond man's physical endowment. Why is it that Mencius especially brings up *li* and righteousness to clarify the goodness of human nature?

Answer: When people in ancient times talked about human nature, they only talked about the physical endowment and never clearly referred to *li* and righteousness as nature, because this was considered evident and not necessary to mention. So their views were predictable. When we come to the time of Mencius, diverging views emerged. Some considered *li* and righteousness as tools for the sages to bring about order in the world, and so laws, which people were forced to obey, were enacted. All notions harmful to *dao* have resulted from taking *li* and righteousness as something external. People only know that the way the ear relates to sound, the eye to colour, the nose to smell and the mouth to taste constitutes nature; but they do not know that the heart relates to *li* and righteousness just like the ear, eye, nose, and mouth relate to sound, colour, smell, and taste. Therefore, Mencius asked:

Is there with regard to the hearts only nothing which they all approve of?⁴⁰

Thus, he used the known to prove the unknown. [Just as] he derived the desire for sound, colour, smell, and taste from the ear, eye, nose, and mouth, so he derived the love of *li* and righteousness from the heart, taking both as internal and not as external. The purpose of this analogous reasoning was to disperse confusion in the world, making it clear beyond doubt that *li* and righteousness constitute nature. As a result, notions harmful to *dao* would hopefully disappear. Mencius made clear that both the capacity of man's heart to discern *li* and righteousness and the capacity of the ear, eye, nose, and mouth to discern sound, colour, smell, and taste are rooted in human nature and not later acquired. Later Confucians saw that when Mencius talked about nature, he talked about *li* and righteousness, about humanity, righteousness, propriety, and wisdom. Not grasping his doctrine they added a nature of *li* and righteousness beyond the physical endowment, and projected this notion back to Mencius.

⁴⁰ *Meng Zi*, 6A:7.

1.8.

Question: The desires for sound, colour, smell, and taste should also be considered as rooted in the heart. Now you specifically take the love of *li* and righteousness as rooted in the heart, and with regard to “the love of that beautiful virtue”⁴¹ this is decidedly so. But are then the desires for sound, colour, smell, and taste only rooted in the ear, eye, nose, and mouth? The heart is the ruler of the bodily organs, and the functions of the bodily organs are all functions of the heart. How then could the ear’s delight in sound, the eye’s delight in colour, the nose’s delight in smell, and the mouth’s delight in taste not be the heart’s delight?

Answer: This is not so. The heart can control the ear, the eye, the nose, and the mouth, but not replace their functions. Each one of them has its own function, and so one cannot perform the function of the other. Men and things receive their form from heaven and earth, with which they are therefore always linked. The space between heaven and earth is filled with sound, colour, smell, and taste; and except for sound, colour, smell, and taste there is nothing which fills up the space between heaven and earth. The ear, the eye, the nose, and the mouth are the link – the opening – between what is without and what is within. With regard to the five phases there is production and conquest. Production means mutual compatibility, and conquest means mutual repulsion. Whether your blood and *qi* are nourished depends on this. The fact that you can rely on what is without for nourishing what is within is entirely due to the activity of *yin* and *yang* and the five phases; [these] fill up the space between heaven and earth without and are complete in your body within, and so there is full compatibility between what is within and what is without and the way of nourishing [life] is complete.

The people are simple, daily they enjoy their drink and food.⁴²

Since ancient times and up until today this has been a constant aspect of *dao*. Blood and *qi* are dependent on [what is without] for nourishment and are linked [with what is without] by the ear, eye, nose, and mouth. Being so linked, each organ can fulfill its function and be in charge of its respective task. Confucius says:

In youth when his blood and *qi* are still unsettled he [the gentleman] should guard against colour [the attraction of feminine beauty]. In the prime of life when his blood and *qi* have

⁴¹ *Shijing*, 260; quoted in *Meng Zi*, 6A:6; cf. above section 1.3.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 166; tr. Karlgren, *The Book of Odes*, pp. 109–110.

become unyielding, he should guard against bellicosity. In old age when his blood and *qi* have declined, he should guard against acquisitiveness.⁴³

Blood and *qi* perform different functions, but it is clear that sensual desires are rooted in blood and *qi* and not in the heart.

Mencius says:

Li and righteousness please my heart just as meat pleases my mouth.⁴⁴

This is not a metaphor. Whenever someone acts in accordance with *li* and righteousness, his mood will definitely be relaxed and content; but if he acts contrary to *li* and righteousness, his mood will be gloomy and frustrated. This shows that the heart relates to *li* and righteousness just as blood and *qi* relate to desires. In both cases nature determines what they are like. The ear, eye, nose, and mouth are organs who play the roles of ministers, while the heart is an organ who plays the role of a ruler. The ministers perform their functions and the ruler judges whether their actions may be accepted. What may be determined as right and proper – this and nothing else is *li* and righteousness. But again, not just any idea of the heart may be used to judge whether something may be accepted or not. If just any idea of the heart could be used to judge whether something may be accepted or not, how would this be different from [arbitrary] coercion? Thus, *li* and righteousness do not exist outside of matters of fact.

Where there is a thing there is a law.⁴⁵

Thus, the fact is that things are regulated by their laws. With regard to man's heart there is no separate *li* given to him and embodied in the heart. The spiritual enlightenment of the heart is entirely sufficient to know the unchanging laws of matters of fact. For example, all light shines, and when it illuminates *li*, the light will be so strong that there will be no mistake [in perception].

⁴³ *Lunyu*, 16:7, tr. D.C. Lau, *The Analects*. p. 140, mod.

⁴⁴ *Meng Zi*, 6A:7.

⁴⁵ *Shijing*, 260, quoted in *Meng Zi*, 6A:6; cf. section 1.3.

1.9.

Question: By learning more about the words and deeds of the past, scholars may add such knowledge as they lack. When Confucians of the Song said that “*li* is received from heaven and stored in the heart”, they had probably arrived at this doctrine in analogy with the insights which they had gained from the ancient worthies and sages through scholarly inquiry and then stored in the heart. Is this not so?

Answer: Man’s blood and *qi* and his mental faculty, which are rooted in *yin* and *yang* and the five phases, constitute his nature. For example, blood and *qi* rely on drink and food for nourishment. Once digested [this nourishment] turns into blood and *qi* and is no longer the things that you ate and drank. It is the same with insights gained through scholarly inquiry, on which the mental faculty depends. As far as blood and *qi* are concerned, their development from weakness to strength is due to the nourishment that blood and *qi* have received. As far as the mental faculty is concerned, its development from narrowness to broadness and from darkness to enlightenment, is due to the nourishment that the mental faculty has received. Therefore it is said, “though stupid you will surely become enlightened”.⁴⁶ As endowed by heaven, man’s blood and *qi* and his mental faculty are often imperfect and, depending on whether they get nourished or not, there will be great variations. If you realize that scholarly inquiry is like drink and food, you will value that which has been digested and not that which has not been digested. To memorize what you learn through inquiry is to take in and not digest. What you have grasped you may abide by calmly, rely on deeply, and apply freely from the fountainhead. Then your mental faculty may reach its peak and attain the supreme enlightenment of the sages. Spiritual enlightenment actually refers to the heart itself, and not to something separate from the heart, which is received by and stored in the heart. If it were separate from the heart, and at the same time received by and stored in the heart, this would still mean, in terms of study, learning without digestion – and what would it then mean in terms of nature?

⁴⁶ *Zhongyong*, 20; cf. section 1.6.

1.10

Question: Since the Song dynasty those who have talked about *li* have argued that “what does not issue from *li* issues from desires and what does not issue from desires issues from *li*.” They have thus demarcated the boundary between *li* and desires and argued that this is where the gentleman is distinguished from the small man. But now you hold that *li* refers to feelings that do not err. This means that *li* exists in desires. Is it then wrong to have no desires?

Answer: Mencius says:

There is nothing better for the nurturing of the heart than to reduce the number of desires.⁴⁷

He makes clear that man should not have no desires, only reduce their number. There is no greater pain in man’s life than to be unable to preserve and fulfill his own life. To desire to preserve and fulfill your own life and also to preserve and fulfill the lives of others is humanity. To desire to preserve and fulfill your own life to the point of destroying the lives of others without any regard is inhumanity. It is true that inhumanity starts when your heart desires to preserve and fulfill your own life and that if this desire were eliminated, there would definitely be no inhumanity. But then you would also look upon the poverty and hardship of men in the world with indifference. You do not necessarily have to preserve and fulfill your own life, but then you will not have a feeling for preserving and fulfilling the lives of others either.⁴⁸ One can thus say that what does not issue from correctness issues from perverseness and what does not issue from perverseness issues from correctness, but one cannot say that what does not issue from *li* issues from desire and what does not issue from desire issues from *li*. Desire is a thing (*wu*) and *li* is its law (*ze*). What does not issue from perverseness but from correctness still often errs in partiality of opinion, and then it is not possible to comply with *li*. But since the Song dynasty *li* and desires have been discussed only in terms of the distinction between correctness and perverseness. So if something does not issue from perverseness but from correctness, this is said to be a response to facts in accordance with *li*. *Li* and facts are divided into two and then united in [the form of] an opinion, and this is harmful to facts. It is the heart that responds when coming into contact with facts. If the heart is obscured, matters of fact cannot be grasped – and how could we then grasp *li*?⁴⁹

⁴⁷ *Meng Zi*, 7B:35, tr. D.C. Lau, *Mencius*, p. 201 mod.

⁴⁸ Dai Zhen here makes the important point that desires and feelings are essential to man’s moral capacity.

⁴⁹ Dai’s point here is to clarify the ethical importance of having not only good intentions but also knowledge of the external world.

Lao Zi valued “to hold on to the one” and “to have no desires”,⁵⁰ and the book of Zhuang Zhou says:

The sage is tranquil (*jing*) not because he takes tranquillity to be good but because the myriad things are insufficient to distract his heart. [...] If water is clear when still (*jing*) how much more so is the spirit. How tranquil is the sage’s heart! [...] Vacuity, tranquillity, limpidity, quietness, inaction – these are the level of heaven and earth, the quintessence of *dao* and its virtue.⁵¹

Master Zhou says in his [work] *Penetrating The Book of Changes*:

- Can one become a sage through reading?
- Yes.
- Is there any essential way?
- Yes.
- Please explain it to me.
- The essential way is to [concentrate on] one thing. By [concentrating on] one thing is meant to have no desires. Having no desires one is vacuous while tranquil, and straightforward while in action. Being vacuous while tranquil, one becomes enlightened and hence penetrating. Being straightforward while active, one becomes impartial and hence all-embracing. Being enlightened, penetrating, impartial, and all embracing, one is almost a sage.⁵²

These are the doctrines of Lao, Zhuang, and Shakyamuni. Master Zhu also several times talked about “being obscured by desire” and then he always meant that if you have no desires you will not be obscured. This is not the *dao* of *The Doctrine of the Mean*, “though stupid you will surely become enlightened”.⁵³ There are those who are stupid from birth and who are so although they have no desires. Whatever issues from desire is always concerned with life and its support. Desires err in selfishness, not in obscurity.⁵⁴ [The selfish person] thinks that he adheres to *li*, but what he

⁵⁰ Lao Zi, 22 and 57.

⁵¹ Zhuang Zi, “Tiandao”. The last word “virtue” is a translation of the Chinese word *de* 德. Karlgren explains the meaning of this word: “The word 德, which in Western works as a rule is translated as ‘virtue’, ‘vertu’, ‘Tugend’ is etym. the same as 得 [...] to obtain, get, attain to, reach, and so the [de] virtue really means the reaching [of *dao*], the attainment of the highest insight.” Karlgren makes this comment in reference to Lao Zi, 23. See “Notes on Lao-tse”, pp. 1–18.

⁵² Zhou Zi – Master Zhou (1017–1073; tr. Chan, *A Source Book*, pp. 465–480.

⁵³ Zhongyong, 20.

⁵⁴ Dai’s view is that desires may err in selfishness, not in obscurity, and that it is the lack of knowledge that causes obscurity which in turn causes desires to err. He may have been the first Chinese philosopher to make this point.

adheres to is in fact erroneous. Consequently, he is obscured and unenlightened. The greatest weaknesses in people in the world, whether in the past or at present, are selfishness and obscurity. Selfishness is the product of error in desire, and obscurity is the product of error in knowledge. Desires are the product of blood and *qi*, while knowledge is the product of the heart. Desires are censured because of obscurity, and the heart is censured because of knowledge. This is why Lao Zi says:

[The sage] always causes the people to have no knowledge and no desires.⁵⁵

He neglected the body and esteemed the True Master. Later Shakyamuni's doctrines appeared different but were in fact the same.

The Confucians of the Song went in and out of the schools of Lao Zi and Shakyamuni. *The Life of Master [Cheng] Mingdao*, authored by Cheng Shuzi, says: "After listening at the age of fifteen or sixteen to Zhou Maoshu [Zhou Dunyi] lecturing about *dao*, I became fed up with the civil service examinations and resolute in my search for *dao*. I devoured the works of the different philosophical schools. For nearly ten years I went in and out of the schools of Lao Zi and Shakyamuni before I returned to the Six Classics to seek *dao*, and only then did I grasp it."⁵⁶ *The Life of Master [Zhang] Hengqu*, authored by Lü Yushu, says: "The honourable Fan Wenzheng advised people to read *The Doctrine of the Mean*, and the Master did so. However, although he liked it, he found it insufficient and therefore turned to the writings of the schools of Lao Zi and Shakyamuni. After several years he had exhausted their theories and knew that there was nothing to be grasped from them, and so he returned to the Six Classics in his search for (it:) *dao*."⁵⁷ Liao Deming records in the *Collected Conversations with Master Zhu* from the year 1173: "The Master said: 'Two or three years ago I was still confused with regard to this matter and held that it was similar to Buddha's doctrines. Only recently have I come to see the matter clearly.'"⁵⁸ At the age of fifteen and sixteen Master Zhu admired *chan* doctrines. When he was twenty-four he met Li Yuanzhong who taught him to pay attention to the words of the sages and worthies.⁵⁹ However, after that he again turned to the school of Shakyamuni, [which he held on to] until the year 1173 at the age of 44. Therefore, their words are mixed with the words of Lao Zi and Shakyamuni.

The Book of Odes says:

The people are simple, daily they enjoy their drink and food.⁶⁰

⁵⁵ *Lao Zi*, 3; tr. Karlgren, "Notes on Lao-tse".

⁵⁶ Cheng Mingdao is another name for Cheng Hao (1032–1085). Cheng Shuzi is another name for Cheng Yi (1033–1107). This biography is included in the *Henan Cheng shi yishu*, *juan* 11; in *Er Cheng ji*, pp. 630–639.

⁵⁷ Lü Yushu is another name for Lü Dalin (1046–1092), a pupil of the Cheng brothers. Zhang Hengqu is another name for Zhang Zai (1020–1077). Fan Wenzheng is another name for Fan Zhongyan (989–1052).

⁵⁸ *Zhu Zi yulei*, *juan* 113.

⁵⁹ Li Yuanzhong is another name for Li Tong (1088–1163), who was Zhu Xi's teacher.

⁶⁰ *Shijing*, 166; tr. Karlgren, *The Book of Odes*, pp. 109–110.

The people are simple, daily they enjoy their drink and food.⁶⁰

The Book of Rites says:

Drink and food and sex: in these exist man's great desires.⁶¹

In governing the whole world the sages sympathized with the feelings of the people and satisfied their desires. Thereby the kingly way was completed. People know that Lao, Zhuang, and Shakyamuni differed from the sages. When people hear about their doctrine that one should have no desires, they do not accept it. However, when we come to the Song Confucians they do believe that (they:) Lao, Zhuang, and Shakyamuni were not different from the sages, and [since the time of the Song Confucians] everyone can discourse on the dichotomy of *li* and desires. Thus, it is not to be wondered at that the rulers of modern times consider that the feelings of the people, which the ancient sages sympathized with, and the desires of the people, which they satisfied, are mostly base and petty and not to be taken into account. But when it comes to using *li* to censure, [the rulers] have not found it difficult to invoke the most sublime moral principles of the day to pass sentences in the name of righteousness. The exalted use *li* to censure the humble, the old use *li* to censure the young, and the noble use *li* to censure the mean. This is called proper, even if they are wrong. But if the humble, the young, and the mean use *li* to struggle, then they are called rebellious, even if they are right. As a result, those who are placed below cannot communicate the feelings and desires shared in the world to those above. Those who are placed above use *li* to censure those below, and the crimes of those who are placed below are too numerous for anyone to enumerate. When someone dies under the law there are yet those who pity him, but who will pity someone who dies under *li*? Alas, mixing what they have to say with the words of Lao and Shakyamuni, they have actually caused more harm than Shen [Buhai] or Han [Fei Zi].⁶² Did the Six Classics and the writings of Confucius and Mencius really take *li* as if it were a thing separate from the feelings and desires through which man's nature manifests itself, and did they use coercion to implement it? Mencius told the rulers of Qi and Liang to "share their enjoyment with the people",⁶³ "reduce punishment and taxation",⁶⁴ "ensure that [the people's means of support] are sufficient for the care of [their] parents, on the one hand, and for the support of wife and children, on the other hand",⁶⁵ and to see to it that "those who stay at

⁶¹ *Liji*, "Liyun".

⁶² Shen Buhai (ca 385–337 B.C.) and Han Fei Zi (280–233) were famous Legalist philosophers.

⁶³ *Meng Zi*, 1A:2. The text in *Meng Zi* reads *yu min xie le*; Dai Zhen has *yu min tong le*.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 1A:5.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 1A:7.

home have full granaries and those who go to war have full sacks”⁶⁶ and that “there are neither girls pining for a husband nor men without a wife.”⁶⁷ This is what humane rule and the kingly way are like.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 1B:6.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 1B:5.

1.11

Question: “The Record of Music” speaks about eliminating heavenly *li* and indulging human desires without restraint. This seems to be to distinguish between *li* and desires in terms of correctness and perverseness. How can that be?

Answer: [Human] nature may be compared to water, and desires to the flow of water. If regulated and not excessive so that they conform to heavenly *li*, desires constitute the *dao* of reciprocally giving life and nourishment and may be compared to the course of water on the ground. If human desires are indulged without restraint so that man’s heart becomes perverse and false and his actions lewd and rebellious, they may be compared to the turbulent flow of a flood inundating the country. When the sages teach us to examine ourselves in the light of others, placing ourselves in the position of others while assuming that others in the same way place themselves in our position, and to contemplate what it feels like to be the object [of an action], this may be compared to Yu when he regulated the flow of water, letting it flow its natural course and not hindering it for fear that it might overflow. Those who have elaborated theories to hinder the flow of water for fear that it might overflow have in fact blocked it at its source. This is a metaphor for repressing desires or having no desires.⁶⁸ “The way the mouth is disposed towards tastes, the eye towards colours, the ear towards sounds, the nose towards smells, and the four limbs towards ease”⁶⁹ – this later Confucians have regarded as the selfishness of human desires, whereas Mencius said that this is nature and added that “therein lies the decree”.⁷⁰ “Decree” means restriction; for example, if there is a decree to head towards east you cannot head towards west. This is to say that the desires pertaining to nature must be regulated. If regulated and not excessive, desires conform to heavenly *li*. This is not to take heavenly *li* as correct and human desires as perverse. Heavenly *li* means to control desires and not indulge them without restraint. Thus, desires must neither be indulged without restraint, nor eliminated. To possess [desires] and regulate them so that one’s feelings become neither excessive nor insufficient – can that be said not to agree with heavenly *li*?

⁶⁸ Note the remarkably Freudian tenor of Dai’s reasoning in this passage.

⁶⁹ *Meng Zi*, 7B:24, tr. D.C. Lau, *Mencius*, p. 198.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

1.12.

Question: The Doctrine of the Mean says:

[T]he gentleman is cautious over what he does not see and apprehensive over what he does not hear. [...] the gentleman is watchful over himself when he is alone.⁷¹

These words are the basis for the doctrine expounded by later Confucians of preserving *li* and repressing desire.⁷² Now if you say that desires may be compared to the flow of water, this means that they must not be blocked. If water can really follow its own course on the ground, it will conform to its specific *li* wherever it flows. To use this idea to prevent a flood is not unreasonable. But if the meaning of these words in *The Doctrine of the Mean* is not only to prevent a flood, what is it then?

Answer: What is referred to as “cautious” and as “apprehensive” may be explained in terms of seriousness and dissoluteness. Whenever someone is seen by the eyes of someone else, he becomes cautious with regard to his demeanour; whenever he is heard by the ears of someone else he becomes apprehensive lest he make a mistake. The gentleman is like this although he does not find himself before another man, i.e., he is serious and dare not be the least dissolute. This is what is meant when it says at the end of the work:

[T]he gentleman is serious without any movement and truthful without any words.⁷³

What is referred to as “watchful when alone” may be explained in terms of perverseness and correctness. Any activity originates in the will, e.g., becoming visible originates in being hidden and making manifest originates in being subtle. When the will has just been stirred, this is not seen by others.

⁷¹ *Zhongyong*, 1; tr. Chan, *A Source Book*, p. 98, mod. In his annotation Zheng Xuan quotes the *Daxue*: “When the inferior man is leisurely, there is no limit to which he does not go in his evil deeds.” (1.6; tr. Chan, *A Source Book*, p. 89) Zheng Xuan then adds: “The gentleman is not like this. Although there is no one who can see him and no sound by which he may be heard, he is still cautious and apprehensive.” (SSJZS, p. 1625.) Kong Yingda writes in his commentary: “The gentleman is always on guard when he cannot see. Although others cannot see him, he is still cautious. Then imagine how much less inclined he would be to commit evil acts when he sees and is seen. Thus, the gentleman is always cautious. That the gentleman is apprehensive when he cannot hear means that he is always fearful and timorous when nothing is heard; although ears cannot hear he is still apprehensive. Even when one cannot see and hear he must still be apprehensive, let alone when one can see and hear.” (SSJZS, p. 1625.)

⁷² See for example Zhu Xi’s comment on this section of *Zhongyong* translated by Wing-tsit Chan, *A Source Book*, p. 98. Zhu Xi’s interpretation refers to the gentleman’s inherent but intangible moral insight, *li*, which is “received from heaven and embodied in the heart.”

⁷³ *Zhongyong*, 31; tr. Chan, *A Source Book*, p. 113 mod.

This is what is meant when it says at the end of the work:

[T]he gentleman examines his own heart and sees that there is nothing wrong there and that he is not dissatisfied with himself. The gentleman is unequalled in the fact that he [is cautious] in those things which people do not see.⁷⁴

Thus, before responding to facts, seriousness and dissoluteness are separated. When coming into contact with facts and being stirred, perverseness and correctness are separated. To be serious is to be constantly restraining oneself, and to be dissolute is the opposite of this. Someone may be serious and correct, but if he harbours partial opinions he cannot be said to adhere to *li*. His wisdom may be sufficient to grasp *li*, but if he is not serious, he will often become remiss; and if he is not correct, he will be altogether hypocritical. Each of these three has its significance: first, to avoid remissness; second, to keep away strictly from hypocrisy; and third, to shun the peril of partiality.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

1.13.

Question: Since the Song dynasty Confucians say that *li* is “received from heaven and embodied in the heart”.⁷⁵ As they think that *li* is received by everyone, they attribute the differences with regard to wisdom and stupidity to the physical endowment. Their doctrines concerning seriousness and dissoluteness and concerning perverseness and correctness are meant to give substance to their doctrine concerning *li* and desires. Lao Zi’s precepts “hold on to the one”⁷⁶ and “have no desires”,⁷⁷ and Shakyamuni’s precept “be always alert”⁷⁸ refer to the True Master and to True Emptiness respectively. Zhuang Zi says: “It would seem as if they have some True Master, and yet I find no trace of him.”⁷⁹ The Buddhist writings say: “This kind of enlightenment constitutes the miraculous wisdom of True Emptiness.”⁸⁰ “True Emptiness can absorb the myriad things and accommodate any changes.”⁸¹ “Still and always quiet, unlimited in function and response. It functions but is always empty, it is empty but always functions. It functions but is not existent; it is True Emptiness. Being Emptiness it is not nonexistence; it is all the wonderful things and beings.”⁸² The Song Confucians have replaced these with *li* and then taken the precepts as the learning of the sages. Considering *li* to be received from heaven, they have created the doctrine of *li* and *qi* which they compare to “two things merged with one another”. *The Recorded Conversations with Master Zhu* says: “*Li* and *qi* are certainly two different things. But considered from the standpoint of things, the two are merged with one another and cannot be separated and exist in different places. However, this does not detract from the fact that each one of them is a thing.”⁸³ They describe *li* in a most elaborate manner and call it “pure, empty, and vast”. “Someone asked about the doctrine that first comes *li* and afterwards comes *qi*. Master Zhu replied: “This goes without saying. But do we know at a given moment that *li* comes first and *qi* comes afterwards, or that *li* comes afterwards and *qi* comes first? Neither conclusion can be arrived at through examination. But if we use our thoughts to gauge them, it would seem that *qi* is dependent on *li* for its operation. When there is condensation of this *qi*, *li* is present within it. Thus, it is *qi* that has the capacity to condense and to create, whereas *li* lacks volition or plan and has no creative power. Yet the fact is simply that wherever *qi* condenses into one spot, *li* is present within it. Moreover,

⁷⁵ See section 1.5.

⁷⁶ *Lao Zi*, 22.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 57.

⁷⁸ A common *chan* saying derived from Master Ruiyan (ca 850–910).

⁷⁹ Zhuang Zi, “Qiwu lun”; tr. Burton Watson, *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu*, p. 38.

⁸⁰ Quote from Dahui Song Gao (1089–1163), one of the leading *chan* Masters of the Song. See *Dahui pujue chanshi yulu*, juan 25.

⁸¹ This quote is found in *Zhu Zi yulei*, juan 126.

⁸² Quote from *Jingde Chuandeng lu*, juan 30; tr. Wing-tsit Chan, *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, 1, p. 358.

⁸³ *Zhu Zi quanshu*, juan 49:5b; cf. Chan, *A Source Book*, p. 715, note 32.

in the case of all human beings, plants, trees, birds, and beasts of the universe, not one can come into being save through propagation. It is certain that without such propagation not a single creature could be born. This all pertains to *qi*. *Li* on the other hand constitutes only a pure, empty and vast world, utterly shapeless and hence incapable of producing anything, whereas *qi* has the capacity to ferment and condense and in this way bring things into being.”⁸⁴ All that this means is that they explain *li* as well as the meaning of the Six Classics and the words of Confucius and Mencius in terms of what Lao, Zhuang, and Shakyamuni refer to as the True Master and True Emptiness. By which criteria can these now be distinguished so that they absolutely do not become mutually entangled and confused?

Answer: With respect to heaven and earth, men, and things, facts and actions, I have not heard that any of these has no *li* that can be talked about. It is just as it says in *The Book of Odes*:

Where there is a thing there is a law.⁸⁵

The term “thing” refers to concrete objects and facts, while the term “law” refers to the unmixed purity and central correctness of these.⁸⁶ Concrete objects and facts are without exception natural, and it is when they conform to what is necessary that the *li* of heaven and earth, men and things, facts and actions prevail.⁸⁷ Heaven and earth are vast, men and things are numerous, facts and actions are complex and varied. But if they are in accord with *li* and are similar to something as straight as the plumb-line, as level as water, as round as the compass, and as square as the measuring square, then they will conform to the norm, even if they are extended to everything in the world for ten thousand generations to come. *The Book of Changes* says:

[The great man] may precede heaven and heaven will not act in opposition to him. He may follow heaven but will act only as heaven at the time would do. If even heaven does not act in

⁸⁴ *Zhu Zi yulei*, juan 1, pp. 4–5; tr. Bodde in Fung Yu-lan, *A History of Chinese Philosophy*, 2, pp. 542–543 mod. For an explanation of the meaning of this passage, see Fung Yu-lan, *ibid.* Forke remarks that Zhu Xi in this passage interprets *li* in Daoist terms and defines it as devoid of feelings and will although, at other times, he does ascribe these qualities to the “Urprinzip” – *taiji* –, which is also *li*; see Forke’s *Geschichte der neueren chinesischen Philosophie*, p. 174.

⁸⁵ *Shijing*, 260; cf. section 1.3, p. 9.

⁸⁶ In Dai Zhen’s usage, *wu* refers to inanimate objects but also to animals and to matters and phenomena. Sometimes it is difficult to pinpoint the denotation that Dai Zhen intended. In this translation *wu* is most often rendered into English as “thing”, which should then be understood in a broad sense. But sometimes *wu* is also rendered as “animals and things” or just “animals” or “creatures”.

⁸⁷ “Necessary” – *biran* – refers to what is morally right as opposed to what merely is. Dai Zhen may have been the first Chinese philosopher to use *biran* in this sense.

opposition, how much less will men do so! How much less will spiritual beings do so!⁸⁸

The Doctrine of the Mean says:

[The *dao* of the great leader] is tested by the experience of the Three Kings and found without error, applied before heaven and earth and found not to be in contradiction with their operation, laid before spiritual beings without doubt, and can wait for a hundred generations for a sage [to confirm it] without giving rise to any doubt.⁸⁹

To be like this is to be in accord with *li* and to be "approved by all hearts".⁹⁰ Mencius says:

The compass and the square are the ultimate standards of squares and circles; the sage is the ultimate standard of human relations.⁹¹

When we talk about heaven and earth and subtly discuss their *li*, it is just as when we talk about the sage and say that he can be emulated. To exalt this *li* and at the same time say that heaven and earth, or *yin* and *yang*, are not sufficient to represent it can only mean that this is not the *li* of heaven and earth and of *yin* and *yang*. It is the same with this *li* of heaven and earth and *yin* and *yang* as with the sageness of the sage: can one exalt sageness and at the same time say that the sage is not sufficient to represent it? The sage is a man, too, and because he completely fulfills the *li* of man, all people praise him as sagely and wise. To fulfill the *li* of man completely only means to fulfill completely what is necessary in the daily activities of human relations. When we examine these inductively to the ultimate state where they are unchangeable and which constitutes their necessity, we describe the ultimate state and do not trace the origin. Later Confucians have gone too far and regarded ideas and arguments, which merely refer to the ultimate state, as if they were a thing which comes into being when merging with *qi*. Those who have heard this [doctrine expounded] have got used to it and so do not examine it. Therefore, no one realizes that it differs from the Six Classics and the words of Confucius and Mencius. If we seek what is necessary and unchangeable in heaven and earth, men and things, facts and actions, we shall find *li* perfectly clear and evident. But if we exalt and magnify it and not only call it the *li* of heaven and earth, men and things, facts and actions, but, through a shift in speech, say that *li* is everywhere and regard it as if it were a thing, then scholars will be unable to find such a thing even if they search for it until their hair turns white and they become utterly confused. It is not that

⁸⁸ *Yijing*, "Qian wenyan"; cf. Gao Heng, *Zhouyi dazhuan jinzhū*, pp. 72f.

⁸⁹ *Zhongyong*, 29; tr. Tu Wei-ming, *Centrality and Commonality: An Essay on Chung-yung*, p. 131, which is a modified version of Wing-tsit Chan's translation in *A Source Book*, p. 111.

⁹⁰ *Meng Zi*, 6A:7; cf. section 1.4., p. 10 and note 32.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 4A:2; cf. Chan, *A Source Book*, p. 31 mod.

the Six Classics and the words of Confucius and Mencius are hard to understand. It is only that annotations and commentaries have accumulated and people have imbibed these from childhood and then not thought about them.

1.14.

Question: The Song Confucians took *li* as if it were a thing, received from heaven and embodied in the heart. They considered that man comes into being through the condensation and agglomeration of *qi* and by *li* attaching itself to *qi*. Master Zhu says: "It is through the union of *li* and *qi* that man comes into being. Heavenly *li* is indeed infinitely great, but with no *qi* there is nothing to which *li* can attach itself. So only after the two [modes of] *qi* have come into contact with each other and after condensation and agglomeration of *qi* have taken place does *li* have something to which it can attach itself."⁹² They considered this *li* "complete and self-sufficient". Master Cheng says: "The sages and worthies who discuss heavenly virtue say that from the beginning the self is a heavenly complete and self-sufficient thing. If it is unpolluted, one should act in accord with it; if it is polluted to some extent, one should tend it with seriousness and restore it to its original state."⁹³ If this were so, there would be nothing left to study. But they realized that the way the ancient worthies and sages discussed study differed distinctly from the way of Lao, Zhuang, and Shakyamuni, who discarded study. Therefore, they argued that *li* becomes polluted by the body and by *qi*, and so the purpose of study is to "return to the beginning". Master Zhu explains the first chapter of *The Analects* as well as [the dictum] in *The Great Learning* that "[the way of learning to be great] consists in manifesting the clear character" in terms of "returning to the beginning".⁹⁴ The words "return to the beginning" appear in Zhuang Zhou's book. The chapter "Improving nature" of the *Zhuang Zi* says: "Those who set about improving nature through vulgar learning, hoping thereby to return once more to the beginning; those who set about muddling their desires through vulgar ways of thought, hoping thereby to attain clarity – they may be called the blind and benighted people." It also says: "Culture destroyed the substantial, breadth drowned the heart, and after this the people began to be confused and disordered. They had no way to revert to the original form of their nature and thereby return to the beginning."⁹⁵ What they refer to as *li* corresponds to what Shakyamuni refers to as "the original state", and what they refer to as "preserving *li*" corresponds to what Shakyamuni refers to as "be always alert". Shakyamuni's scriptures advocate "recognizing your original state at the time when you think of neither good nor evil."⁹⁶ Mr. Xie from Shangcai says: "Seriousness is the way to be always alert."⁹⁷ Wang Wencheng, in explaining

⁹² *Zhu Zi yulei*, juan 4, p. 105.

⁹³ Cheng Zi – Master Cheng – is here Cheng Hao. Quote from *Henan Cheng shi yishu*, juan 1; see *Er Cheng ji*, 1, p. 1; tr. A.C. Graham, *Two Chinese Philosophers*, p. 131 mod. Dai Zhen seems to take *tiande* "heavenly virtue" as more or less synonymous with *tianli* "heavenly *li*". I slightly modify Graham's translation to emphasize this aspect of Dai's interpretation.

⁹⁴ *Lunyu jizhu*, 1:1 and *Daxue zhangju*, 1.

⁹⁵ Tr. Watson, *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu*, pp. 171–173 mod.

⁹⁶ Saying in *Liuzu tanjing* quoted by Wang Yangming in *Chuanxilu*, 2:162, tr. Wing-tsit Chan, *Instructions for Practical Living*, p. 141 mod.

⁹⁷ Xie Liangzuo (ca 1060–1125), a pupil of the Cheng brothers whose home was in Shangcai xian in Henan province. Quote from *Shangcai yulu*, juan 2.

the dictum “the perfection of knowledge depends on the investigation of things” of *The Great Learning*, argued for guarding against [the allurements of] external objects, saying: “The original state is what our Confucian school calls innate knowledge. [...] To investigate things as they come is the task of the extension of knowledge.”⁹⁸ Do really the doctrines of Confucians since the Song all imply conversion to Buddhism by means of citing Confucian writings?

Answer: Lao, Zhuang, and Shakyamuni hold that the True Master and the True Emptiness that they speak about are “complete and self-sufficient”, but they cannot say that there are good but no bad people, or that there are wise but no stupid people. Therefore they slander goodness and wisdom. Lao Zi says:

Abandon learning and there will no longer be worries
How much difference is there?
Between good and evil
How great is the distance?”⁹⁹

He also says:

To rule a state with wisdom
will be to the detriment of the state.
Not to rule a state with wisdom
will be a boon to the state.¹⁰⁰

And he says:

Of old those who were good at pursuing *dao* did not use it to enlighten people but to make them stupid.¹⁰¹

Here he expounds the doctrine that if a man is tranquil and has no desires, he will transcend good and evil and that wisdom is not as good as stupidity. Thus he explicitly suggests to “abandon learning”, “abandon sageliness and discard wisdom”,¹⁰² and to “abandon humanity and discarded righteousness”.¹⁰³ This is one doctrine.

Xun Zi holds that *li* and righteousness are products of the sage’s heart, and that ordinary people can understand *li* and righteousness only after study; if

⁹⁸ Wang Wencheng is another name for Wang Yangming. Quote from *Chuanxilu* 2:162; tr. Wing-tsit Chan, *Instructions for Practical Living*, p. 141.

⁹⁹ *Lao Zi*, 20; tr. D.C. Lau, *Tao Te Ching*, p. 76 mod.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 65.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² See *Lao Zi*, 19.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

they follow what comes natural to them, there will be strife. Only abilities which do not require study are part of nature, and abilities which are acquired are not part of nature. Therefore he says that nature is evil. He disputes the doctrine of Mencius that nature is good and says:

If man's nature were good, we could dispense with sage-kings and forget about propriety and righteousness. But if his nature is evil, then we must get along with sage-kings and exalt propriety and righteousness.¹⁰⁴

This is another doctrine. Xun Zi had got used to hearing people enmeshed in the doctrines of Lao, Zhuang, and Gao Zi discard study and slander propriety and righteousness, and as a result he did not understand the meaning of Mencius' doctrine that nature is good. He took propriety and righteousness as the sage's means to teach all men in the world to control their nature so that there would be no strife. But then he did not understand the basis of the notions of propriety and righteousness. Lao, Zhuang, Gao Zi – and later Shakyamuni – did argue that, as Xun Zi puts it, we could dispense with sage-kings and forget about propriety and righteousness.

Master Cheng and Master Zhu say that, in addition to the physical endowment, heaven imparts *li* to man and that, apart from the sage who from his birth knows *li* and how to practise it, there is no one whose *li* is unpolluted, although it is received from heaven; it is only after study that this *li* becomes clear and restored as originally received. Thus, although all men in the world have received *li* from heaven, all are alike in that no one possesses [*li* completely]. This is another doctrine again. Now a rich man leaves his son a thousand *zhong* of grain, whereas a poor man has no grain to give. For the poor man's son there is no [grain] in his house, so he has to acquire it by means of his own daily efforts. The rich man's son also has to acquire it by means of his own daily efforts, but then they say that what he acquires comes from his own home. Such a doctrine is not tenable. Thus they are very careful when it comes to discussing seriousness but careless when it comes to discussing study. For example, Master Cheng says: "One should tend it with seriousness and restore it to its original state", but he does not touch on study.¹⁰⁵ Master Zhu explains the words "when equilibrium and harmony are realized to the highest degree" in *The Doctrine of the Mean* in terms of "being cautious, apprehensive and watchful when alone".¹⁰⁶

Lu Zijing, Wang Wencheng and others traced the origin of the True Master and of True Emptiness, which Lao, Zhuang, and Shakyamuni had referred to, and held that these are complete in the sage's wisdom, that they are complete

¹⁰⁴ Xun Zi, "Xing e"; for my translation I draw on Wing-tsit Chan, *A Source Book*, p. 132 and Burton Watson, *Hsün Tzu. Basic Writings*, p. 163.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. note 100 in this section.

¹⁰⁶ *Zhongyong zhangju*, 1.

in *li*. Lu Zijing says: "Collect your spirit. Be your own master. 'All things are already complete in yourself.' What is it that is lacking? When I am commiserative, I am naturally commiserative. When I should be ashamed, liberal, generous, affectionate, tender, or strong and firm, I am naturally so."¹⁰⁷ Wang Wencheng says: "The sage's effort at extending knowledge is characterized by his absolute sincerity which never ceases. The substance of his innate knowledge is as clear as a bright mirror without any slight obscuration. Whether a beautiful or an ugly object appears, it reflects it as it comes, without anything being left behind of the bright mirror itself. This is what is meant by saying that the feelings of [the sage] are in accord with all things and yet of himself he has no feelings'. Buddha had a saying: 'One should have no attachment to anything and thus let the mind grow.' This is not incorrect. In the bright mirror's response to things, what is beautiful appears beautiful and what is ugly appears ugly. In the same reflection all things are reflected and are true. This is like the mind growing. What is beautiful appears beautiful and what is ugly appears ugly. The things pass along without remaining in the mirror. This is where the mirror has no attachment."¹⁰⁸ This is another doctrine again. When Master Cheng and Master Zhu through a shift in speech use the doctrines of Lao, Zhuang, and Shakyamuni to explain *li*, this is not to convert to Buddhism by means of citing Confucian phrases: it is to mix mistakenly Confucianism with the words of Shakyamuni. But when Lu Zijing, Wang Wencheng and others use *li* to refer in substance to the doctrines of Lao, Zhuang, and Shakyamuni, this is indeed to convert to Buddhism by means of citing Confucian phrases.

If we try to compare man's body with his moral nature, his body is small to begin with but ends up big, while his moral nature is dull and benighted to begin with but ends up sagely and wise. The growth of his body depends on the nourishment of drink and food, which increases his growth every day; this is not "to return to the beginning". Moral nature depends on study and [may] advance to sageliness and wisdom: this is clearly not "to return to the beginning". Men and animals differ by belonging to different categories, but man's endowment of *qi* is clear, and that makes him different from birds and beasts who cannot comprehend [*li* and righteousness]. If we compare men with each other, they differ somewhat in degree with regard to capacity. The ancient worthies and sages knew that the capacity of men differs in degree and therefore emphasized inquiry and study and valued [personal] development. Lao, Zhuang, and Shakyamuni said that all men are born alike and so gave priority to eliminating feelings and desires, so that these would cause no harm. They did not find it necessary for man to develop through inquiry and study.

¹⁰⁷ Lu Zijing, other name for Lu Xiangshan (1139–1193). Quote from *Xiangshan quanji*, 35:18a. tr. Chan *A Source Book*, p. 586. Lu Xiangshan quotes *Meng Zi*, 7A:4.

¹⁰⁸ "Wencheng" (completion of culture) was the posthumous title given to Wang Yangming 38 years after his death. Quote from *Chuanxilu*, 167; tr. Chan, *Instructions for Practical Living*, pp. 148–149. The saying "the feelings of the sage..." is taken from a letter from Cheng Hao to Zhang Zai; see "Da Hengqu Zhang Zihou xiansheng shu", *Er Cheng ji*, pp. 460–461. The Buddhist saying is found in *Jin'gang jing*.

Content to preserve the self, Lao, Zhuang, and Shakyamuni expounded their doctrines by slandering the notions of humanity and righteousness. Xun Zi said that the nature of ordinary men is such that only after study can they know propriety and righteousness. This doctrine is also worth expounding.¹⁰⁹ Lu Zijing, Wang Wencheng and others agreed with Lao, Zhuang, and Shakyamuni but deviated from their slander of humanity and righteousness. They argued that humanity and righteousness are naturally complete, which was a clever device for expounding their doctrine. Master Cheng and Master Zhu exalted *li*, taking it to be imparted to men by heaven. This was like Xun Zi, who exalted propriety and righteousness, taking these to be imparted to men by the sages. When they said that *li* is polluted by the body and by *qi*, this meant that they considered the body and the *qi* of all those beneath sages as ugly. This is Xun Zi's doctrine that nature is evil. When they took *li* as a separate thing to be attached [to something], this was like Lao, Zhuang, and Shakyamuni who talked about the True Master and True Emptiness as being attached to the body. Since *li* was complete and self-sufficient, it was difficult to argue for study as a means for understanding *li*. It became necessary to distinguish between *li* and *qi* as two roots¹¹⁰ and to censure the body and *qi*. This theory, which was put together by odd bits and pieces, is confusing to those who study it. Although it contains all the sayings of the Six Classics and of Confucius and Mencius, mistaken interpretations are so frequent as to leave no room for correct understanding. Thus, understanding is no longer sought. Alas, how could I then keep silent?

¹⁰⁹ Dai Zhen's comments on Xun Zi in this section make clear that he appreciates the importance that Xun Zi attached to study. However, in opposition to Xun Zi, and in agreement with Meng Zi, he argues that man's dispositions for goodness and for acquiring knowledge are part of his nature.

¹¹⁰ Dai Zhen uses the word "root" (*ben*) to mean something like "a basic ontological category".

1.15.

Question: After going in and out of the schools of Lao and Shakyamuni for some decades, Cheng Bozi¹¹¹ returned to the Six Classics to seek [*dao*], and only then did he find it. This can be seen from the biography that [Cheng] Shuzi¹¹² authored. At the age of about forty Master Zhu was still concerned about the wonder of emptiness and wrote a letter to Secretary of State Wang in which he said:

With respect to Shakayamuni's doctrines I used to learn from the man and respect his *dao*, which I found it urgent to seek but never attained. Later I gave the teachings of other gentlemen higher priority and, for the time being, put his doctrines aside and devoted myself to our learning [Confucianism]. Thus, at first there was not one day when [Buddhism] was not in my mind. But after I had thoroughly examined our doctrines I was not late in seeking [the *dao* of Confucianism]. [...] For the last year or two my heart has possessed that with which to be at ease. Although I had been unable to find it in (ourselves:) our Confucian learning, I sought it in foreign learning so as to revert to the original heart. This was not possible.¹¹³

Although Cheng and Zhu followed Shakyamuni for a long time, they were finally able to realize that his doctrine was false and that it did not conform to the Six Classics and to Confucius and Mencius. So what was their learning really like?

Answer: Master Cheng and Master Zhu both went in and out of the schools of Lao and Shakyamuni in search of *dao*. If they were to find the *dao* of these schools correct, they would not care if others considered it false. At first they did not convert to the other schools and turn their backs on the Six Classics and on Confucius and Mencius. But not understanding these and seeing that certain ideas of the other schools, such as "to discard material desires" and "to look into the self illuminated by one's inner light", resembled the idea "to experience personally and examine closely,"¹¹⁴ they thought that to do so would gradually clarify ideas. So they hoped that by grasping (them:) the ideas of Lao and Shakyamuni they would be able to discriminate facts and things. But when they complied to the utmost with these doctrines, so that "nature

¹¹¹ Cheng Bozi, other name for Cheng Hao.

¹¹² Concerning this biography, cf. above section 1.10, note 56. The first sentence of this section is a direct quote from the biography.

¹¹³ "Da Wang Shangshu shu", *Zhu Zi daquan*, juan 30; SBBY, p. 3.

¹¹⁴ Zhu Xi expounded on this concept in his statements on "book learning" (*dushu*), which were collected in juan 10–11 of the *Zhu Zi yulei*. Zhu Xi argued that book learning in itself is not enough, that what is learnt from books must be made part of one's self and be tested in practice. For example, he said: "In studying books you must personally experience and test [what you learn], you must not only consider the words." (*Zhu Zi yulei*, juan 11.) Concerning this aspect of Zhu Xi's thought, see Zhang Liwen, *Zhu Xi sixiang yanjiu*, pp. 623–624.

could be seen in a clear heart”¹¹⁵ and “the original substance was restored” – i.e., the substance was realized and everything should be sufficient without deficiencies –, then, in fact, they made mistakes as soon as they acted. No matter whether Lao, Zhuang, or Shakyamuni were actually right or wrong, Master Cheng and Master Zhu intended to seek *dao* and they learnt after a long time that their doctrines could not be relied upon to judge and discriminate facts and things. Therefore, they finally said that their [doctrines] were false.

Man differs from animals and things in that he can understand what is necessary, whereas the lives of the different animals and things follow what is natural. Lao Zi says:

Attain complete vacuity,
Maintain steadfast quietude.¹¹⁶

And he also says:

Dao models itself on what is natural.¹¹⁷

Shakyamuni does not differ from him on this point. Both proceed from selfishness and make their spirits live for ever divorced from the body. Lao Zi speaks about “living long and being seen for a long time”,¹¹⁸ and he takes death to be “a restoration of reality”.¹¹⁹ “Living long” refers to the dissolution of the body and the everlasting existence of the spirit. When Shakyamuni says “not being born and not perishing”,¹²⁰ then “not being born” means to live without a body, and “not perishing” means that the spirit lives eternally. [Human] nature and *dao* they conceive of and talk about as the spirit.

Master Shao says:

Dao and [the number] one are strained designations for the spirit.¹²¹

¹¹⁵ This concept denotes a state of mind that the *chan* Buddhists sought to attain. Anzhenghui says that this expression can be found in a postscript to the *Zongjinglu*. I have not been able to locate this postscript.

¹¹⁶ *Lao Zi*, 16; tr. Chan, *A Source Book*, p. 147.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 25; tr. Chan, *ibid.*, p. 153 mod.

¹¹⁸ See *Lao Zi*, 59.

¹¹⁹ This expression may be found in the *Zhuang Zi*, “Qiushui”.

¹²⁰ *bu sheng bu mie*. Soothill comments on the meaning of this term: “This is another term for [*changzhu*] permanent, eternal; nothing having been created nothing can be born. Hinayana limits the meaning to the state of nirvana, no more birth and death; Mahayana in its Madhyamika form extends it universally, no birth and death, no creation and annihilation.” *A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms*, p. 108.

¹²¹ Shao Zi, “Master Shao”, refers to Shao Yong (1011–1077). Quote from his *Huangji jingshi*, “Guan wu pian”.

He also says:

The spirit has no spatiality, but nature has substance.¹²²

And he says:

Nature is the body of *dao*. The heart is the abode of nature.¹²³

And he says:

Man's spirit is the spirit of heaven and earth.¹²⁴

If we look at the whole corpus of his words, we can see that he was most influenced by Lao and Zhuang. That which he calls *dao* refers to “the spirit of heaven and earth”, which has no spatiality. What he calls nature refers to “man's nature” which has substance and which he therefore calls the body of *dao*. Master Shao further says:

The spirit is ruled by the heart, *qi* is ruled by the kidney, and the body is ruled by the head. When the body and *qi* come into contact and the spirit rules in their midst, this is the *dao* of the three capacities.¹²⁵

This obviously refers to the spirit residing in the heart, and so he says that “the heart is the abode of nature”. He also says:

Qi nourishes nature and nature controls *qi*. So when *qi* exists, nature exists, and when nature moves *qi* moves.¹²⁶

This obviously indicates that the spirit controls *qi* and at the same time relies on *qi* for nourishment. Wang Wencheng says: “Now, innate knowledge is one. In terms of its miraculous functioning, it is called spirit; in terms of its universal operation, it is called *qi*.”¹²⁷ This view is the same [as Master Shao's] and just like the Daoist nourishment masters who say: “Clear and undarkened spirit is nature. Dense and unceasing *qi* is the decree.”¹²⁸ Instead of referring to the spirit as *dao* and [human] nature as the spirit, Master Zhu in these cases speaks about *li*.

¹²² *Ibid.*

¹²³ Quote from the preface to *Yichuan jirang ji*.

¹²⁴ *Huangji jingshi*, “Guan wu pian”.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ *Chuanxi lu*, 154; tr. Chan, *Instructions for Practical Living*, p. 133.

¹²⁸ Anzhenghui says that this quotation is taken from “Xingming zhuzhi”, included in the *Daozang jinghua lu*. I have not had access to the *Daozang jinghua lu*, but according to *Zhongguo congshu zonglu* there is a work called *Xingming guizhi* in the *Daozang jinghua lu*. I therefore presume that *Xingming zhuzhi* is a misprint for *Xingming guizhi* and that the quotation can be found in the latter work.

Master Zhang says:

From the Great Vacuity there is the notion of heaven. From the transformation of *qi* there is the notion of *dao*. In the unity of the Great Vacuity and *qi*, there is the notion of nature. And in the unity of nature and consciousness, there is the notion of the heart.¹²⁹

What he calls vacuity is not referred to by the Six Classics or by Confucius and Mencius. Master Zhang also says:

Spirit means the Great Vacuity in its miraculous response.¹³⁰

And he says:

The unfathomable character of heaven is called spirit, the regularity of spirit is called heaven.¹³¹

And he says:

The spirit is the nature of heaven; transformation is the *dao* of heaven.¹³²

What he refers to as vacuity and heaven does not go beyond what he calls spirit. Lao, Zhuang, and Shakyamuni, who emphasized the value of their spirit, also considered it to be miraculous in its response and to be void and vacuous, to be sufficient [to represent] the nature of heaven. For example: "Nature encompasses the realm of law (*dharma-dhatu*). Pure wisdom is perfect and miraculous. In essence it is itself empty and still."¹³³ Master Zhang also says:

Qi [has the two modes] *yin* and *yang* which, when gradually extended, are called transformation and which, when united and unfathomable, are called spirit.¹³⁴

This is indeed so. Applied to human beings it means that the ear, the eye, and the bodily organs are united and belong to the heart, the heart being the united and unfathomable spirit.

Of all the myriad things between heaven and earth there is not one which does not have its root in *yin* and *yang*. *The Book of Changes* says:

¹²⁹ Zhengmeng, "Taihe pian"; tr. Chan, *A Source Book*, p. 504, mod.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, tr. Chan, *A Source Book*, p. 505.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, "Tiandao pian".

¹³² *Ibid.*, "Shenhua pian".

¹³³ *Jingde Chuandeng lu*, juan 3 and 18.

¹³⁴ Zhengmeng, "Shenhua pian".

Refined *qi* creates the objects.¹³⁵

Zeng Zi says:

The refined *qi* of *yang* is called *shen* (spirit), and the refined *qi* of *yin* is called *ling* (soul). *Shen* and *ling* are the roots of the different objects.¹³⁶

Since spiritual, it is not only called *qi* but refined *qi*. The mistake of Lao, Zhuang, and Shakyamuni was that they deviated on this point and separated [the spirit from the body]. They regarded the spirit as primary and the body as secondary, as a mere dwelling place.¹³⁷ Thus they held that all physical desires, righteousness between ruler and minister, and the affection between father and son, between brothers, and between husband and wife arise only after the body has come into being, the spirit being utterly vacuous and quiescent, not having any desires and not acting. Since Lao, Zhuang, and Shakyamuni only saw what is natural, they were content with the spirit only.¹³⁸ Master Cheng and Master Zhu saw that the *li* and righteousness that the Six Classics and Confucius and Mencius talked about belonged in the realm of unchangeable necessity – a level of understanding that Lao, Zhuang, and Shakyamuni could not attain. Therefore they exalted [*li* and righteousness] as equivalent to that which [the Daoists and Buddhists] call spirit: as being the root which creates *yin* and *yang*, although separate from these; and as being the nature of men and animals, although separate from the physical substance. On the other hand, that which Confucius and Mencius called *dao* they said was not *dao*, and that which these called nature they said was not nature.

Only Master Zhang's doctrines may be recorded separately. For example, he says:

From the transformation of *qi* there is the notion of *dao*. [...] Transformation is the *dao* of heaven. [...] When gradually extended [*yin* and *yang*] are called transformation and, when united and unfathomable, [they] are called spirit.¹³⁹

¹³⁵ *Yijing*, "Xici", A. The passage continues: "The vagrant soul brings about change. Through this we know the conditions of the ghost [which leaves the body] and the spirit [which is inseparable from the body]." The meaning of the passage in the *Yijing* is clearly that the soul as well as the body are made up of *qi*, albeit different kinds of *qi*. But it also expresses the view that the ghost – an aspect of the soul – can exist apart from the body. For the interpretation of this passage in *Yijing*, see Gao Heng, *Zhouyi dazhuan jinzhū*, p. 512.

¹³⁶ *Da Dai Liji*, "Tianyuan"; cf. above section 1.6, note 37.

¹³⁷ Dai Zhen has indeed quoted classical passages which assert that the spirit as well as the body are made up of *qi*, but his quotations from the *Yijing* and the *Liji* do not seem to support the view that the spirit cannot be separated from the body.

¹³⁸ They saw only the natural, not the "necessary" (ethical) aspect of man.

¹³⁹ See above, p. 210 and note 129.

These statements mark the return of a sage and cannot be altered. Master Zhang saw that what is necessary is *li*, and so he did not speak solely about “the spirit” but about “the regularity of the spirit”. Not to take *li* as if it were a separate thing, which is exactly what he does not do in these statements, is close to the Six Classics and to Confucius and Mencius. With regard to heaven and earth, transformation constitutes production and reproduction, and the spirit constitutes the ruler. These two cannot be separated. Thus, transformation encompasses the spirit, and the spirit encompasses reproduction. Transformation lets us know the spirit; transformation and the spirit let us know virtue, and virtue is the centre and correctness of heaven and earth. Man possesses blood and *qi* and therefore he also possesses a mental faculty. Possessing a mental faculty anyone can, although he may not be a sage and although the degree of enlightenment varies from person to person, by means of study disperse darkness and attain enlightenment. All things produced by heaven have one root.¹⁴⁰ If we ascribe nature specifically to the spirit, we shall see the body as an encumbrance. If we ascribe nature specifically to *li*, then you will have to censure your physical substance, unless you are a sage with innate knowledge. In both cases the reason is [the assumption of] two roots.

Lao, Zhuang, and Shakyamuni exalt the spirit as transcending *yin* and *yang* and the transformation of *qi*, whereas these [the school of the Cheng brothers and of Zhu Xi] exalt *li* as transcending *yin* and *yang* and *qi*. In his letter in reply to Lü Ziyue, Master Zhu says:

Yin and *yang* and the relations between ruler and minister, between father and son are facts and things which, just like man’s actions, are all below form and constitute the innumerable images in their multitude. Each one of these has a normative *li*, which constitutes *dao* and the road that should be followed and which exists above form, empty and still and not showing a sign.¹⁴¹

But *The Book of Changes* says:

They determined the *dao* of heaven and called it *yin* and *yang*.¹⁴²

And *The Doctrine of the Mean* says:

The relations between ruler and minister, between father and son, between husband and wife, between elder and younger brothers, and between friends constitute the universal *dao* in the world.¹⁴³

¹⁴⁰ Cf. note 110 above.

¹⁴¹ Quoted from “Da Lü Ziyue”, *Zhu Zi daquan*, juan 48; *SBBY*, p. 16.

¹⁴² *Yijing*, “Shuogua”.

¹⁴³ *Zhongyong*, 20; tr. Chan, *A Source Book* mod.

In both these cases *dao* is defined with reference to facts and things. Are really the words of the sages and worthies less analytical and penetrating than the words of Master Zhu?

When the sage follows the desires of his blood and *qi*, this is the way of reciprocally giving life and nourishment. Since he regards others as himself, he is loyal; since he puts himself in the position of others, he is altruistic; since he shares the joys and worries of others, he is humane; since he proceeds from correctness and not from perverseness, he is righteous; since he is polite and not disrespectful, he conforms to propriety; since he does not err, he is wise. Are there really any other kinds of loyalty, altruism, humanity, righteousness, propriety, and wisdom? Desires of ordinary men, when given free rein, lead to depravation, strife, and unrest. The sage's desires all constitute beautiful virtue. The desires are the same, and this is the only difference between being good and not good. Desires are natural to blood and *qi*, and the love of this beautiful virtue is natural to the mental faculty. This is why Mencius says that nature is good. In accordance with what is natural to it, the mental faculty always delights in *li* and righteousness: it is only that it has not been possible for everyone to grasp *li* fully and to conform to righteousness. To examine what is natural to blood and *qi* and thereby get to know what is necessary – this is *li* and righteousness. The natural and the necessary are not two separate matters. When what is natural is fully understood without the slightest error, this is what is necessary. Thus, when you have reached this stage and, not regretting anything, feel at ease, this is the ultimate standard of the natural. If what is natural is indulged without the slightest restraint so that it leads to error, then it loses its naturalness. So to conform to what is necessary is precisely to fulfill what is natural.

Man's life is nothing but his blood and *qi*. Lao, Zhuang, and Shakyamuni saw that ordinary people must not indulge without restraint what is natural to their blood and *qi*. Therefore they used quiescence to nourish what is natural to the mental faculty. That which is necessary to the mental faculty they called nature, and that which is necessary to [man's] blood and *qi* they called desire. Although their words are elusive, this is in fact merely a way of distinguishing blood and *qi* and the mental faculty as two roots. Xun Zi saw the mental faculty of ordinary men but considered propriety and righteousness as the sage's heart. He saw that ordinary men could not indulge without restraint what is natural to their blood and *qi* and to their mental faculty. Therefore he thought that propriety and righteousness constitute what is necessary. That which is natural to blood and *qi* and to the mental faculty he called nature, and the necessary propriety and righteousness he called teaching. He brought blood and *qi* together with the mental faculty as one root, but he did not grasp the root of propriety and righteousness. Master Cheng and Master Zhu saw that ordinary men must not indulge without restraint what is natural to their blood and *qi*. Therefore they proceeded to regard *li* as necessary. That which is

natural to blood and *qi* and to the mental faculty they called physical substance, and the necessary *li* they called nature. They, too, brought blood and *qi* together with the mental faculty as one root, but they also added one root [*li*]. The separation of blood and *qi* and the mental faculty as two roots Master Cheng censured as “the heresy of taking the heart as a root”, while he said about the root that they added, “we Confucians take heaven as a root.”¹⁴⁴ According to their doctrine the human heart is a heart by virtue of man and not by virtue of heaven, and human nature is nature by virtue of heaven and not by virtue of man. To separate heaven from man is, in fact, to separate nature from man. This separation of man and nature began with Master Cheng and Master Zhu. Gao Zi said:

To turn human nature into humanity and righteousness is like turning the willow into cups and bowls.¹⁴⁵

Mencius had to dispute this and argued that it would mean that you have to violate [human nature]. Is it not an even worse form of violation to make this kind of separation?

Thus, the learning of Master Cheng and Master Zhu was based on Lao, Zhuang, and Shakyamuni. They only substituted the character *li* for the “True Master” and “True Emptiness” while leaving the rest unchanged. Their learning was not derived from Xun Zi but fortuitously coincided with Xun Zi. – Therefore, what he considered as evil they also censured, and what he had taken as emanating from the sages they took as emanating from heaven. Is there really any difference between emanating from heaven and emanating from the sages? There is only one root in the world and nothing beyond that.¹⁴⁶ When there is blood and *qi*, there is also a mental faculty. Possessing a mental faculty one may, by means of study, develop and attain spiritual enlightenment. That this is so is because there is [only] one root. If two [roots] are distinguished, then one must inevitably be considered as secondary. After the Six Classics and Confucius and Mencius came Xun Zi, Lao, Zhuang, and Shakyamuni, but the *dao* of the Six Classics was still there. However, from the time that the Song Confucians mixed the Six Classics and the writings of Confucius and Mencius with [the words of] Xun Zi, Lao, Zhuang, and Shakyamuni, scholars have not understood their errors, and so the *dao* of the Six Classics and of Confucius and Mencius has perished.

¹⁴⁴ Quote from *Henan Cheng shi yishu*, juan 21, A; see *Er Cheng ji*, 1, p. 274.

¹⁴⁵ *Meng Zi*, 6A:1; tr. Chan, *A Source Book*, p. 51.

¹⁴⁶ This is a clear statement of Dai Zhen’s ontological monism.

Chapter 2

2.1. The Dao of Heaven Four sections.

2.1.1.

Dao is the same as *xing* (movement). The flowing movement of the transformation of *qi* produces and reproduces without pause and is therefore called *dao*. *The Book of Changes* says:

Yin and *yang* in alternation are what is meant by *dao*.¹

“The Great Plan” says:

The five phases: the first is called water, the second fire, the third wood, the fourth metal, the fifth earth.²

Xing (movement) is a general designation for *dao*. [The ode] “*Zaichi*” in *The Book of Odes* says: “Young girls are prone to have love feelings and each of them makes her journey (*xing*).”³ Mao’s annotation says: “*Xing* (journey) means *dao*.”⁴ [The ode] “*Zhugan*” says: “When a girl makes her journey, she goes far away from brothers and father and mother.”⁵ Zheng’s commentary says: “*xing* (journey) means *dao*.”⁶ When *yin* and *yang* are mentioned, they comprise the five phases, because *yin* and *yang* both possess the five phases. When the five phases are mentioned, they comprise *yin* and *yang*, because the five phases all possess *yin* and *yang*. *The Book of Rites of the Elder Dai* says:

What is divided from *dao* is called the decree. What takes from in individuals is called nature.⁷

This is to say that men and things exist by virtue of their share of *yin* and *yang* and the five phases, and that all men and things are restricted by their share as

¹ *Yijing*, “*Xici*”, 1:5.

² *Shijing*, “*Hongfan*”, tr. Karlgren, *The Book of Documents*, p. 30.

³ *Ibid.*, 54; tr. Karlgren, *The Book of Odes*, p. 36.

⁴ For Mao’s annotation, see *SSJZS*, p. 320.

⁵ *Shijing*, 59; tr. Karlgren, *The Book of Odes*, p. 41.

⁶ For Zheng Xuan’s commentary, see *SSJZS*, p. 325.

⁷ *Da Dai Liji*, *juan* 80.

far as the formation of nature is concerned. *Yin* and *yang* and the five phases constitute the concrete substance of *dao*; blood and *qi* and the mental faculty constitute the concrete substance of [human] nature. Since there is this concrete substance, it can be divided, but because it is divided, the result is not equal for all. Thus, men of ancient times said that nature is rooted in the *dao* of heaven.

2.1.2.

Question: The Book of Changes says:

Above form it is called *dao*, below form it is called objects.⁸

Master Cheng [Hao] says:

This statement is enough to make it perfectly clear how 'above' and 'below' are to be distinguished. *Dao* has never been anything but this; it is essential that men silently realize this.⁹

When later Confucians have spoken about *dao*, they have generally based their interpretation on this. Master Zhu says:

Yin and *yang* constitute *qi* and exist below form. That by which *yin* and *yang* exist and alternate is *li* and exists above form. *Dao* is a name for *li*.¹⁰

Whith these words Master Zhu takes *dao* to be a name to which only *li* can correspond. Now you only say that the flowing movement of the transformation of *qi* produces and reproduces without pause, which refers only to that which Cheng and Zhu say exists below form. They expound their thesis on the basis of *The Book of Changes* and therefore scholars believe them. Could you now please tell us how you interpret the *The Book of Changes*?

Answer: When *qi* is transformed into objects and things, there is the distinction between above and below form. Thus form refers to objects and not to the transformation of *qi*. *The Book of Changes* also says:

What establishes the *dao* of heaven is called *yin* and *yang*.¹¹

Yin and *yang* are directly mentioned, whereas we cannot find any statement to the effect that it would be possible to speak about *dao* only after identifying that by virtue of which *yin* and *yang* exist. Are really the established sayings of the sages incomplete? In the language of the men of ancient times there is a distinction between *zhi wei* (is what is meant by) and *weizhi* (is called).¹² Whenever they use *zhi wei*, what is above is used to explain what comes below.

⁸ *Yijing*, "Xici", A.

⁹ *Cheng shi yishu*, juan 11; in *Er Cheng ji*, p. 118; tr. A.C. Graham, *Two Chinese Philosophers*, p. 123, mod.

¹⁰ Zhu's Xi's comment on Zhou Dunyi, *Tong Shu*, "Cheng", 1; see *SKQS*, vol. 1101, p. 421.

¹¹ *Yijing*, "Shuogua".

¹² Cf. Graham, *Two Chinese Philosophers*, p. 124.

For example, *The Doctrine of the Mean* says:

The decree of heaven is what is meant by nature. To follow one's nature is what is meant by *dao*. To cultivate *dao* is what is meant by education.¹³

This explains nature, *dao*, and education. It is the same as saying that nature means that which is decreed by heaven, that *dao* means to follow one's nature, and that education means to cultivate nature. When *The Book of Changes* says that *yin* and *yang* in alternation are what is meant by *dao*, this explains the *dao* of heaven. It is the same as saying that *dao* means the alternation of *yin* and *yang*. Whenever *wei zhi* is used, the concept below identifies the substance of what is above. For example, *The Doctrine of the Mean* says:

That enlightenment results from sincerity is due to (*wei zhi*) nature. That sincerity results from enlightenment is due to (*wei zhi*) education.¹⁴

This does not explain nature and education but uses nature and education to distinguish between "enlightenment results from sincerity" and "sincerity results from enlightenment". When *The Book of Changes* says "what is above form means *dao*, and what is below form means objects", this does not explain *dao* and objects but uses *dao* and objects to distinguish between what is above and what is below form. "Form" means that there is already a physical form; "above form" means the same as "before there is form"; and "below form" means the same as "after there is form". It is like saying: "[above:] before a thousand years, and [below:] after a thousand years." *The Book of Odes* says: "Only in Zhou do those below succeed [their elders]."¹⁵ Zheng's commentary says: "'below' means 'after'."¹⁶ When *yin* and *yang* have not yet assumed physical form, this is called "above form" and clearly not "below form". "Objects" refers to [things] which, once formed, are unchangeable. *Dao* refers to "the substance of things which cannot be left out"¹⁷. *Yin* and *yang* are not below form, but for example the five phases water, fire, wood, metal, and earth, which possess substance and can be seen, are definitely below form; they are objects. But the *qi* of the five phases which man as well as other creatures and things receive, are above form. *The Book of Changes* speaks about "*yin* and *yang* in alternation", and "The Great Plan" says:

¹³ *Zhongyong*, 1.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 21.

¹⁵ *Shijing*, 243; Karlgren translates: "(Descending 'footsteps'=) successors in a line are the Chou". (*The Book of Odes*, p. 197.)

¹⁶ For Zheng Xuan's commentary, see *SSJZS*, p. 525.

¹⁷ *Zhongyong*, 16.

[T]he first is called the five phases.¹⁸

In these cases *yin* and *yang* and the five phases comprise spiritual beings. *The Doctrine of the Mean* says about spiritual beings that they are “the substance of things which cannot be left out”, and this means that substance cannot be separated from *yin* and *yang* and the five phases.¹⁹ In tracing the origin of man as well as other creatures and things this is the end-point. The Six Classics and the writings of Confucius and Mencius do not to my knowledge make a distinction between *li* and *qi*, which later Confucians began to discourse on, saying that *yin* and *yang* belong below form. Thereby the meaning of the concept *dao* was in fact lost.

¹⁸ Quote from *Shujing*, “Hongfan”; tr. Karlgren, *The Book of Documents*, p. 30.

¹⁹ I follow Wing-tsit Chan and render *guishen* as “spiritual beings”. Cf. his “On Translating Certain Chinese Philosophical Terms”.

2.1.3.

Question: When later Confucians discuss *yin* and *yang*, they have to trace their origin from the Great Ultimate and say:

The Ultimate of Non-being and also the Great Ultimate! The Great Ultimate through movement generates *yang*. When its activity reaches its limit it becomes tranquil. Through tranquillity the Great Ultimate generates *yin*. When tranquillity reaches its limit, activity begins again. So movement and tranquillity alternate and become the root of each other, giving rise to the distinction of *yin* and *yang*, and the two *yi* (modes) are thus established.²⁰

Master Zhu explains this saying:

That the Great Ultimate generates *yin* and *yang* means that *li* generates *qi*. When *yin* and *yang* have come into being, the Great Ultimate exists in these and, likewise, *li* exists in *qi*.²¹

He also says:

The Great Ultimate is *dao* which exists above form; *yin* and *yang* are objects below form.²²

Now you have made clear that form refers to objects and things and not to the transformation of *qi*. But when later Confucians base their discussions of *dao* on the Great Ultimate and the two *yi*, this must also be wrong. Ever since the Song, Confucian scholars have been confused in this regard. How can this confusion be dispelled?

Answer: The Great Ultimate and the two *yi* that Confucians of later generations have frequently talked about are not the Great Ultimate and the two *yi* that Confucius originally referred to in his exposition of *The Book of Changes*. Confucius says:

In *The Book of Changes* there is the Great Ultimate. It generates the two *yi*. The two *yi* generate the four forms. The four forms generate the eight trigrams.²³

²⁰ Zhou Dunyi, *Taiji tushuo*; tr. Chan, *A Source Book*, p. 463 mod. In the Neo-Confucian tradition the two *yi* refer to the two modes of *qi*, i.e., *yin* and *yang*. Dai Zhen, however, who wants to avoid the dualistic implication of this usage interprets this word *yi* to refer only to *symbols* in the *Yijing*, viz., the whole line (*qi*) and the divided line (*ou*) which are used in the trigrams and which by themselves refer to *yin* and *yang*. The famous textual scholar Ruan Yuan (1764–1849) has in the *Liji* found the meaning *xiang* (image, symbol) for *yi*; see the entry on *yi* in the *Jingji zuangu*, *juan* 4.

²¹ Zhu Xi, “*Taiji tushuo jie*”, *Zhou Zi quanshu*, *juan* 1.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Yijing*: “Xici”, A; tr. Chan, *A Source Book*, p. 267 mod.

When he mentions “*yi*”, “forms”, and “trigrams”, he explains them all in terms of *The Book of Changes*, and it is not the *yin* and *yang* of the transformation of *qi* that are named the two ^a*yi* and the four forms. *The Book of Changes* contains altogether 64 hexagrams, which are the products of eight trigrams. Thus, these eight trigrams, each of which constitutes a small completion,²⁴ signify heaven, earth, mountains, lakes, thunder, wind, water, and fire. Before they had yet formed the trigrams, the whole line symbolized (^a*yi*) *yang* and the divided line symbolized *yin*, and so these were called the two ^a*yi* (symbols). When a whole line meets another whole line, *yang* has already grown, and this symbolizes major *yang*. When a whole line meets a divided line, *yin* begins to be generated, and this symbolizes minor *yin*. When a divided line meets another divided line, *yin* has already grown, and this symbolizes major *yin*. When a divided line meets a whole line, *yang* begins to be generated, and this symbolizes minor *yang*. Master Fu Xi saw the flowing movement of the transformation of *qi* and so used the symbols (^a*yi*) whole line and the divided line to symbolize this. When expounding the meaning of *The Book of Changes*, Confucius said that it was not by accident that *The Book of Changes* was based on the lines of the trigrams; that, in fact, it was by observing how in alternation the *yin* and *yang* of heavenly *dao* permeated the objects from beginning to end that the whole line and the divided line were drawn to symbolize these. So he said:

In *The Book of Changes* there is the Great Ultimate. It generates the two ^a*yi* (symbols).²⁵

When the two ^a*yi* have come into being, the four forms and the eight trigrams are generated in that order. When Confucius takes the Great Ultimate to refer to the *yin* and *yang* of the transformation of the *qi*, he follows what is said earlier in the text about “understanding heavenly *dao*”, about *yin* and *yang* in alternation being what is meant by *dao*, and about the use of the two ^a*yi*, four forms, and eight trigrams to refer to [the two kinds of] lines in the *The Book of Changes*. Confucians of later generations have taken the two ^a*yi* as *yin* and *yang* and thereby sought the Great Ultimate in something which generates *yin* and *yang*. Is this really what Confucius said?

²⁴ “Xiaocheng”; concerning this concept, see Gao Heng, *Zhouyi dazhuan jinzhu*, p. 530.

²⁵ *Yijing*, “Xici”, A.

2.1.4.

Question: What the Song Confucians say about “above and below form”, *dao* and objects, the Great Ultimate and the two “*yi* you have now examined against Confucius’ explanation of the original text of *The Book of Changes*, and in fact [their words] do not accord with the meaning of the words [of Confucius]. Is it that when they saw that their distinction between *li* and *qi* has no basis in what is written in the Six Classics they used words such as the Great Ultimate, the two *yi*, and “above and below form” to embellish their own doctrines and gain credence among scholars?

Answer: To discard the original meaning of the words of the sages while presenting one’s own doctrines as their words is to vilify the sages. To borrow their words to embellish one’s own doctrines and gain credence is to deceive scholars. To vilify the sages and deceive scholars is not something that worthies such as Cheng and Zhu do. The reason why they erred is that they based themselves on Lao, Zhuang, and Shakyamuni. Someone steeped in preconceptions often unconsciously becomes obscured by these. According to Lao, Zhuang, and Shakyamuni, the self may be divided into a physical body and a spiritual intelligence, and the spiritual intelligence is taken as the root. Extending this idea upward, they regard spiritual intelligence as the root of heaven and earth.²⁶ Lao Zi says: “There is something undifferentiated and yet complete, which existed before heaven and earth.”²⁷ [...] “The thing that is called *dao* is eluding and vague. Vague and eluding there is in it the form. Eluding and vague, in it are things.”²⁸ The writings of Shakyamuni say: “**Question:** ‘What is the Buddha like?’ **Answer:** ‘The Buddha sees nature.’ **Question:** ‘What is nature?’ **Answer:** ‘Nature is function.’ **Question:** ‘What is function?’ **Answer:** ‘With regard to the eye it is called seeing, with regard to the ear it is called hearing; with regard to the nose it is to smell, with regard to the mouth it is to talk, with regard to the hand it is to hold on to, and with regard to the foot it is to run. Extended, it can be seen to encompass the whole realm of law (*dharma-dhatu*); contracted, it exists in a speck of dust. He who understands it knows that it is the Buddha’s nature; he who does not understand it takes it as some demon.’”²⁹ Therefore, they seek for whatever has no shape and leaves no traces as being real, while they look upon everything that possesses form and leaves traces as being illusory.

As for the Song Confucians they consider the physical body and the spiritual intelligence as equally personal and private, whereas they take *li* as received from heaven. Extending [this idea] upwards, they make a clear-cut distinction

²⁶ The last two sentences have also been translated by Bodde; see Fung Yu-lan, *A History of Chinese Philosophy* 2, p. 652.

²⁷ Lao Zi, 25 tr. Chan, *A Source Book*, mod.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 21.

²⁹ *Jingde Chuandeng lu*, juan 3.

between *li* and *qi*, considering *li* to be something that has no shape and leaves no traces but really exists, while they look upon anything that has form and leaves traces as crude and impure. They extend and transpose the words of others. Master Zhu analyzes the [teachings of] Shakyamuni and says: "Confucians consider *li* as something that is neither produced nor extinguished. Shakyamuni considers the spiritual intelligence as something that is neither produced nor extinguished."³⁰ Thus they look upon *qi* as "empty *qi*". Chen Anqing says: "The evolutionary movement of the two [modes of] *qi* is eternal, it produces and reproduces without pause; only empty *qi* is not sufficient, it must have a master, and he is *li*."³¹ They regard the heart as "the container of nature". Master Shao says: "The heart is a container of nature."³² Thus, the former [Buddhists and Daoists] establish a dualism between form and spirit, while they consider the spirit of heaven and earth and the spirit of man to reside in empty *qi* and in a container respectively. The latter establish a dualism between *li* and *qi* as two roots. Master Zhu says: "Between heaven and earth there is *li* and there is *qi*. *Li* constitutes *dao* which is above form and is the root which produces things. *Qi* constitutes the objects which are below form and which are the means by which things are produced. Therefore, when men and things are born they must be endowed with *li* before they can have nature and they must be endowed with *qi* before they can have form."³³ So they consider the *li* of heaven and earth and the *li* of man to reside in empty *qi* and in a container respectively.³⁴

After examining the Six Classics and [the writings of] Confucius and Mencius and still being in the dark about the meaning of nature and the *dao* of heaven, they followed Lao, Zhuang, and Shakyamuni for years, feeling that the only weakness was that they did not deal with *li* and righteousness. So when they came across the statements about above and below form and the notions of the Great Ultimate and the two *yi*, they became suddenly aware and so created the distinction between *li* and *qi*, no longer being able to examine carefully the meaning of the [classical] texts. They took *li* to be the ruler over *qi*, just as the former [the Daoists and Buddhists] took the spirit to be the ruler over *qi*, they took *li* to be able to produce *qi*, just as the former [the Daoists and Buddhists] took the spirit to be able to produce *qi*. Lao Zi says: "*Dao* produced the One. The One produced the two. The two produced the three. And the three produced the ten thousand things. The ten thousand things carry the *yin* and embrace the *yang*, and through the blending of *qi* they achieve harmony."³⁵ They considered *li* to be harmed by the body and by *qi* and they held that if not obscured by human desires, you can return

³⁰ Zhu Zi yulei, juan 126.

³¹ Song Yuan xuean, "Beixi xuean".

³² Shao Yong, in his preface to the Yichuan jirang ji.

³³ "Da Huang Dafu", Zhu Zi daquan, juan 58.

³⁴ This paragraph, except the quotations, has also been translated by Bodde; see Fung Yu-lan, *A History of Chinese Philosophy*, 2, p. 652.

³⁵ Lao Zi; 42.

to the beginning; this is just like the former [the Daoists and the Buddhists] who held that the spirit is born when it receives a body and that if not ensnared by material desires, you can return to the beginning. Whenever [the Daoists and Buddhists] refer to “spiritual intelligence”, they change this and talk about *li*. This is just to use [Daoist and Buddhist doctrines] as precedents for [Confucius and Mencius]; in fact, [Cheng and Zhu] do not base themselves on [Confucius and Mencius]. Scholars who have propagated [these views] from generation to generation have thereby indeed vilified the sages and bought confusion to the Classics. Good indeed is the saying by Han Tuizhi:

To follow the path of Yang, Mo, Lao, Zhaung, and Buddha in learning and wish to reach the *dao* of the sages is like navigating in small isolated waters hoping to reach the sea.³⁶

This is a [good] description of the Song Confucians.

³⁶ “Song Wang xiucai xu”, *Han Changli quanji*, juan 20.

2.2. [Human] Nature. Nine sections.

2.1.1.³⁷

[Human] nature is an allotment of *yin* and *yang* and the five phases which constitutes blood and *qi* and the mental faculty and on the basis of which things and creatures are differentiated. All activities which they engage in after they have come into being as well as all capabilities which they possess and all qualities that they preserve are rooted in this. Therefore, the *The Book of Changes* says:

That which completes it is nature.³⁸

Since men and other creatures and things have come into being through the transformation of *qi*, propagation has taken place for a long time within categories, but the differences between the categories have been the same since times immemorial: they just follow the old [pattern]. The transformation of *qi* is referred to in terms of *yin* and *yang* and the five phases. The completion and transformation of *yin* and *yang* and the five phases is utterly complicated and extremely varied. Thus, when we come to their changing forms, not only are things and creatures different but there are also differences within one category. To receive an allotment of form and *qi* from one's parents is to receive an allotment of *yin* and *yang* and the five phases. That men, animals, and things propagate within their category is natural in terms of the transformation of *qi*. *The Doctrine of the Mean* says:

The decree of heaven is what is meant by nature.³⁹

Because life is restricted by heaven, we speak about the decree of heaven. *The Book of Rites of the Elder Dai* says:

The allotment of *dao* is what is called the decree. The formation into one [form] is what is meant by nature.⁴⁰

³⁷ This section has also been translated by Wing-tsit Chan; *A Source Book*, pp.717–718. I have drawn on his translation for my own.

³⁸ *Yijing*, "Xici", A:5.

³⁹ *Zhongyong*, 1.

⁴⁰ *Da Dai Liji*, 80.

The allotment of *dao* is an allotment of *yin* and *yang* and the five phases. Since assuming one particular form is spoken of as allotment, there is a limitation from the beginning, and things and creatures are unequal in their completeness or incompleteness, thickness or thinness, clearness or turbidity, darkness or brightness, each following its allotment and assuming one particular form, and each completing its nature. However, although the individual natures are different, they are generally differentiated by their categories. Therefore, *The Analects* say:

By nature they are near to each other.⁴¹

This is said with regard to the similarity of men. Mencius says:

All things of the same category are similar. Why should there be any doubt about men? The sage and I are the same in kind.⁴²

To say that things of the same category are similar means that things of different categories are not similar. Therefore, Mencius questioned Gao Zi's doctrine that "inborn is what is meant by nature", saying:

Is the nature of a dog the same as the nature of an ox, and is the nature of an ox the same as the nature of a man?⁴³

This made clear that they must not be confused or identified. The *dao* of heaven is nothing but *yin* and *yang* and the five phases. The natures of men and things are all allotments of *dao*, and each becomes different, that is all.

⁴¹ *Lunyu*, 17:2.

⁴² *Meng Zi*, 6A:7.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 6A:3.

2.2.2.

*Question: The Analects say that by nature [men] are near to each other, and Mencius says that nature is good. Since Master Cheng and Master Zhu a distinction has been made so that each [of these statements] is taken to refer to one [specific kind of] nature. Master Zhu quotes Master Cheng on [the passage in] The Analects: “This refers to physical nature, not to the root of nature. If we speak about the root of nature, then nature is the same as *li*. There is no *li* that is not good, and this is the meaning of Mencius’ statement that nature is good – [from this point of view] in what way could men be [only] near to each other?”⁴⁴ Gao Zi’s doctrine that “inborn is what is meant by nature” is taken to accord with Confucius.⁴⁵ Master Cheng says: “Nature is one; why does he only say ‘near to each other’? This merely refers to physical nature as in the colloquial expressions ‘quick by nature’ or ‘slow by nature’. To talk about nature in this way is to say that inborn is what is meant by nature.”⁴⁶ He also says: “Whenever nature is talked about, we must see what is the intention. For example, when it is said that human nature is good, this refers to the root of nature; [the statement] ‘inborn is what is meant by nature’ refers to what is endowed. Confucius said: “By nature [men are] near to each other. If this referred to the root of nature, why did he then [only] say that by nature [men] are near to each other? It only refers to what is endowed. What Gao Zi said was originally correct but in answer to Mencius it was wrong.”⁴⁷ The notion of “physical nature” was created while *li* was considered as the goodness referred to by Mencius and to constitute the root of creatures. Master Cheng says: “When Mencius explains nature we should consider the context. It is not that he denies that, as Gao Zi said, ‘inborn is what is meant by nature’, for this too is nature; but to call that nature which comes after life has been received according to the decree, this is different from [Mencius]. Furthermore, in answer to the question, ‘Is the nature of a dog the same as the nature of an ox, and is the nature of an ox the same as the nature of a man?’ there is no harm in taking them as one and the same. When Mencius says that [nature] is good, he traces the root and origin of nature.”⁴⁸ That [nature] which men and beasts receive is also [taken to be] the same. In his commentary on the dictum “the decree of heaven is what is meant by nature” Master Zhu explains Master Cheng’s words “there is no harm in taking them as one and the same”: “‘Decree’ means ‘order’, ‘nature’ is the same as *li*. Heaven, through the transformation of *yin* and *yang* and the five phases, produces the myriad things; *qi* assumes forms and so *li* is imparted to these – this is decree and order. Then when men and creatures are born, the vigorous and gentle five constant virtues, which are made up of *li* imparted to each and everyone, constitute what is called nature.”⁴⁹ This casts some doubt on Mencius. Master*

⁴⁴ *Lunyu jizhu*, 17:2.

⁴⁵ Note that the Latin word “natura” is derived from “nascere”, to be born, and originally also means “inborn”.

⁴⁶ *Henan Er Cheng yishu*, juan 18, in *Er Cheng ji*, p. 207. This passage has also been translated by Graham, *Two Chinese Philosophers*, p. 49 and by Chan, *A Source Book*, p. 568.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ *Henan Er Cheng yishu*, juan 3, in *Er Cheng ji*, 1, p. 63.

⁴⁹ *Zhongyong zhangju*, 1.

Zhu says: "Mencius declares, 'slight is the difference between man and the brutes',⁵⁰ but he does not know why man is different from brutes. He also asks: 'Is the nature of a dog the same as the nature of an ox, and is the nature of an ox the same as the nature of a man?'⁵¹ but he does not know why man differs from an ox or a dog. Between these two paragraphs a transitional explanation seems to be missing. To make them coherent he should have added: Since form and *qi* are different, natures are also somewhat different. I am afraid that while Mencius very clearly saw how human nature is the same, he did not carefully examine these [differences]".⁵² This is what is meant by saying that nature means the same as *li*. However, this does not accord with Mencius and so definitely not with *The Book of Changes* or *The Analects*. When Mencius heard Gao Zi say that inborn is what is meant by nature, he questioned him. Does not the doctrine of Cheng and Zhu almost help Gao Zi oppose Mencius?

Answer: It was Lao, Zhuang, and Shakyamuni that Master Cheng and Master Zhu first studied and followed. Lao, Zhuang, and Shakyamuni valued the spirit but considered the body as secondary, which was obviously to deviate from the sages and to slander humanity and righteousness. Gao Zi never made a distinction between spirit and body, and so he said that [the desires for] food and sex constitute nature,⁵³ while holding that (it:) nature is what is natural. Thus he said:

Nature is neither good nor bad.⁵⁴

He never slandered humanity and righteousness, but if you [as Gao Zi does] compare righteousness to cups and bowls, then this is to say that only by destroying a willow can there be cups and bowls. So the thrust of the comparison does not differ from Lao, Zhuang, and Shakyamuni. All creatures of blood and *qi* know to cherish life and to fear death, and so they seek benefit and avoid harm. Although they are different as far as enlightenment is concerned, they are alike in cherishing life and fearing death. It is not in this regard that man differs from birds and beasts. It is due to the limitations of their consciousness⁵⁵ that birds and beasts know their mother but not their father. But the love of their begetter and the love of their offspring, the love between the sexes as well as the fact that those who are accustomed to living together do not eat each other mean that they are close to cherishing life and

⁵⁰ *Meng Zi*, 4B:19, tr. D.C. Lau, *Mencius*.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 6A:3.

⁵² *Zhu Zi yulei*, juan 4.

⁵³ *Meng Zi*, 6A:4.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 6A:6.

⁵⁵ Chinese *zhijue*.

fearing death. To care for oneself and to extend [this care] to one's kin are two aspects of humanity. The care for oneself is humanity towards oneself; to extend [this care] to one's kin is humanity towards one's kin. Such is the natural outflow of the mental faculty. Neither in this regard does man differ from birds and beasts. Gao Zi considers what is natural to be determined by nature and considers righteousness as something not natural, something that restricts what is natural and forces it to comply. So he says:

Humanity is internal, not external. Righteousness is external, not internal.⁵⁶

The thrust of this doctrine is to preserve your own life. Lu Zijing says:

Evil may do harm to the heart, goodness may also do harm to the heart.⁵⁷

These words correspond essentially to the main ideas of Lao, Zhuang, Gao Zi, and Shakyamuni, that is to value what is natural as a means to preserve your own life. He realizes that to indulge your own desires without restraint and slip into evil is precisely sufficient to harm your life; that is to say, to yearn for humanity and righteousness as goodness, to spare no effort in inquiry and study and to exert yourself mentally may also be harmful to your life. Having formed such a view, your heart will not move.⁵⁸ Such is his doctrine that inborn is what is meant by nature. How could this accord with Confucius?

In their explanation of nature *The Book of Changes*, *The Analects*, and the *Mencius* all say that it is through the allotment of *yin* and *yang* and the five phases that nature is completed. When completed, the nature of man is different from that of animals because of differences in the allotment of *qi*, which may be incomplete, thick or thin, clear or turbid, dark or bright. Just to say that inborn [is what is meant by nature] is precisely to consider man to be like a dog or an ox and not observe the differences. Master Zhu interprets Mencius saying:

Gao does not realize that nature means the same as *li* but considers that *qi* constitutes it. [...] He only realizes that man is like animals with regard to the creeping slowness of consciousness and movement, but he does not realize that man differs from animals with regard to the fineness of humanity, righteousness, propriety, and wisdom.⁵⁹

According to this explanation it was all right for Mencius to bring up men and

⁵⁶ Meng Zi, 6A:4.

⁵⁷ Xiangshan quanji, juan 35.

⁵⁸ This probably means that such a view leads to passivity.

⁵⁹ Meng Zi jizhu, 6A:3.

animals and rebuke Gao Zi. But why did he distinguish between the nature of an ox and the nature of a dog? The difference between a dog and an ox is not a question of the possession of the fineness of humanity, righteousness, propriety and wisdom, so it is clear that we cannot say that Mencius used humanity, righteousness, propriety and wisdom in order to rebuke Gao Zi. Since Gao Zi considered consciousness and movement to constitute nature, then if man were like animals with regard to the slowness of consciousness and movement, why did he not explicitly say so? This shows that consciousness and movement cannot encompass men and animals and make them appear alike with regard to slowness. Anything that possesses life cannot be divorced from the transformation of the *qi* of heaven and earth. The unceasing movement of *yin* and *yang* and the five phases constitutes the transformation of the *qi* of heaven and earth, and the production and reproduction of men and things are rooted in this. Since the allotment of *qi* is [always] incomplete in one way or another, the completed natures are different. Consciousness and movement apply to everything that possesses life. Since the completed natures are different and are rooted in life, consciousness and movement are also different. The natural and immanent movement of *qi* is the same for creatures and plants in the sky and in water, and the capacity for production and reproduction is the same as for heaven and earth. But the original *qi* that they receive and the *qi* on which they rely for nourishment are different. Although the *qi* on which they rely for nourishment comes from without, it is, on the whole, absorbed by the original *qi*. With regard to the five phases there is production and conquest.⁶⁰ Meeting conquest there will be damage or even death. From this it can be known that the natures [of the different categories] are different. The *qi* originally received and the *qi* relied on for nourishment must be mutually compatible and not mutually repulsive. Then the inner and the outer will be one. These [two kinds of] allotment, which are produced through the transformation of the *qi* of heaven and earth, are mutually compatible and not repulsive. In the case of plants and trees, *qi* is such that it can move.

Since the completed nature of each one is different, the body is also different, and thus the usefulness of the hundred organs, which is determined by the movement of the body, is also different in each case. The movement of consciousness is called "perception" (*jue*) and that which the heart penetrates is called "knowledge" (*zhi*). The hundred organs all have perceptions, but the consciousness of the heart is greatest. When something is forgotten habitually, there is no perception; when something different [from the habitual] appears, there is perception. The fish forgets that he is in the water, but someone who

⁶⁰ Cf. above chapter 1, section 8.

was not born in the water cannot forget that he is in the water, and thus there are differences as to whether there is perception or not. Hear insects and birds and know the season; hear the cock's crow and know the time of the day. They are acted upon and perceive; they perceive and respond with sound. The differences in perception are all without exception caused by [differences in] nature. For example, that the crow feeds [its mother] in return; that the osprey practises separation [between the roles of the male and the female]; that the ant understands the relationship between ruler and minister; that the jackal sacrifices beasts and the otter sacrifices fish – all this accords with that which man calls humanity and righteousness, but in each case [the behaviour] is determined by [the respective] nature.⁶¹ Man can develop his knowledge and attain spiritual enlightenment, and then humanity, righteousness, propriety, and wisdom will all be complete. Humanity, righteousness, propriety, and wisdom are nothing but the utmost enlightenment of the heart, knowledge reaching its maximum. Consciousness and movement are innate in men and things; differences with regard to consciousness and movement are [caused by] differences in the nature of men and things. Mencius says:

That which all hearts approve of is called *li* and righteousness. The sages were only first to grasp that which all hearts approve of.⁶²

It is necessary to dispute the doctrine that righteousness is external. To say that *li* and righteousness are nature is not to say that nature is *li*. Nature refers to blood and *qi* and the mental faculty, which are rooted in *yin* and *yang* and the five phases which make men different from animals and things. *Li* and

⁶¹ In Chinese tradition the crow exemplifies the virtue of caring for one's parents in their old age. (See e.g. Li Shizhen's *Bencao gangmu*, *juan* 49, entry on "*ci niao*".) The osprey exemplifies the virtue of conjugal faithfulness. The reference – *jujiu you bie* – alludes to Mao's comment on the much discussed first line of the first ode, "*Guanguan jujiu*". The original meaning of the words *you bie* ("have separation") seems not quite clear; Wen Yiduo says that it refers to the monogamous behaviour of ospreys. ("*Shijing tongyi*"). In his comment Mao goes on to say that if husband and wife "have separation", there will be affection between father and son, righteousness between ruler and minister etc. In the Confucian tradition this relationship between husband and wife is one of the five major human relationships. Zhu Xi argued that these five relationships could be found not only among men but also among animals and insects. (Zhang Liwen, *Zhu Xi sixiang yanjiu*, pp. 569–570). Meng Zi says, "*Fufu you bie*", which Wing-tsit Chan translates as "between husband and wife there should be attention to their separate functions". This is undoubtedly the most common interpretation in the Confucian tradition. I presume that Dai Zhen followed this main current of interpretation and so meant to say that the osprey knows to pay attention to the different functions or roles of the male and the female. In Chinese tradition, the ant exemplifies the ideal righteous relationship between ruler and minister. (See entry on "*bi*" in *Bencao gangmu*, *juan* 40.) The jackal is known for sacrificing beasts. (See entry on "*chai*" in *Bencao gangmu*, *juan* 5.) The otter is known for sacrificing fish to heaven. (See entry on "*ta*" in *Bencao gangmu*, *juan* 51.)

⁶² *Meng Zi*, 6A:7.

righteousness refer to the mental faculty which has the capacity to reach understanding through thinking and which makes it possible to avoid going astray in one's actions. Mencius talked about the goodness of human nature and then he always cited Yao and Shun. This was not to say that Yao and Shun exhausted the [potentiality of] human life. There is always some difference between Yao and Shun and people beneath them. Thus there is definitely some lack of uniformity with regard to the endowment of *qi*. So how could you say that there is no difference with regard to nature? Coming into contact with daily activities in human relations, the mental faculty will make man know compassion, shame and dislike, respect and reverence as well as deference and compliance, right and wrong,⁶³ so that he can master their intricacies. This is what is meant by the goodness of human nature. Knowing compassion he will develop it so that humanity becomes fully realized; knowing shame and dislike, he will develop these so that righteousness becomes fully realized; knowing respect and reverence as well as deference and compliance, he will develop these so that propriety becomes fully realized; knowing right and wrong, he will develop these so that wisdom becomes fully realized. Humanity, righteousness, propriety, and wisdom are the components of beautiful virtue. Mencius says:

Suppose someone were, all of a sudden, to see a child about to fall into a well. He would certainly be alarmed and moved to compassion.⁶⁴

Referring to "compassion" and "humanity", it is not as if outside the mental faculty these were separate things stored in the heart. Since this person himself knows to cherish life and fear death, he will certainly be alarmed by the danger facing the child and be moved to compassion by the child's impending death. If the heart did not cherish life and fear death, how could it then be alarmed and moved to compassion? It is the same with shame and dislike, deference and compliance, right and wrong. If drink and food, sex and all stirrings [of the emotions] caused by [the heart] being acted upon were discarded, so as to revert to stillness and to the one, how could there then be shame and dislike, deference and compliance, right and wrong? This makes it clear that humanity, righteousness, propriety, and wisdom mean nothing but this: while neither cherishing life and fearing death, nor drink and food, sex, or the stirrings [of the emotions] caused by [the heart] being acted upon by [external] things can be discarded so as to revert to stillness or to the one, [man should] rely on his mental faculty being different from birds and beasts in order to be able to avoid going astray in his behaviour, which is what beautiful virtue is. The ancient worthies and sages did not seek humanity, righteousness,

⁶³ Cf. *Meng Zi*, 6A:6.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 2A:6.

propriety, and wisdom outside desire, or separate from blood and *qi* and the mental faculty, but later Confucians considered them as a separate thing appended to man and constituting his nature. What caused this was that the words of Lao, Zhuang, and Shakyamuni were mixed with, and in the end darkened, the words of the Six Classics and of Confucius and Mencius.

Mencius says:

There is no man who lacks goodness.⁶⁵

He takes goodness to mean that man's mental faculty makes him different from birds and beasts so that he can avoid going astray in his behaviour. What he calls goodness at first did not mean ungraded goodness but that which Confucius referred to as "[by nature men are] near to each other". Mencius says:

Given the right nourishment there is nothing that will not grow, and deprived of it there is nothing that will not wither away.⁶⁶ [...] Seek and you will find it; let go and you will lose it. There are cases where one man is twice, five times or countless times better than another man, but this is only because there are people who fail to make the best of their capacity.⁶⁷

This means the same as Confucius' words "through practice they have become far apart".⁶⁸ To say that they fail to make the best of their capacity means that they do not develop their mental faculty but cultivate evil and follow what is wrong. Those who deviate from propriety and righteousness know themselves that they are wrong, and this is because there is no man who lacks goodness. Since [there are those who] cultivate evil and follow what is wrong, there is, though nature is good, no lack of small men. When Mencius says that with repeated dissipation man will not be far removed from birds and beasts,⁶⁹ this means the same as when Confucius says the most stupid do not change.⁷⁰ Later Confucians have carefully examined the meaning of these passages and found them contradictory. Mencius says:

Were the nature of taste to vary from man to man in the same way as horses and hounds differ from me in kind, then how does it come about that all palates in the world follow the preference of Yi Ya?⁷¹

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 6A:2.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 6A:8.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 6A:6.

⁶⁸ *Lunyu*, 17:2.

⁶⁹ *Meng Zi*, 6A:8.

⁷⁰ *Lunyu*, 17:2.

⁷¹ *Meng Zi*, 6A:8.

And he also says:

[Heaven ... will] shake his heart and harden his nature.⁷²

These words of Mencius are very revealing and all refer to the nature of blood and *qi* and the mental faculty. When did Mencius in his own words divide nature into two? The division of nature into two was the work of the Song Confucians.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 6B:15.

2.2.3.

Question: Any species of blood and *qi* possesses refinement, and the refinement of man can increase and attain spiritual enlightenment. When *The Analects* say that the wisest and the most stupid do not change,⁷³ this means that without practice they are far apart. If practice is not sufficient to make them change, does this not mean that the refinement of the most stupid is equivalent to that of animals?

Answer: It is difficult to talk about *li* and righteousness to those who are most stupid from birth. It is because they themselves discard study that they do not change. But if they fear authority and cherish grace, it often happens that one day they meet someone whom they fear and cherish and then this opens their hearts and awakens their awareness. If they repent and pursue goodness, they are no longer the most stupid. If they also study they may advance from day to day and attain wisdom. Those who do not change are defined as the most stupid; often they know what is good but do not do it and know what is not good and do it. Therefore [*The Analects*] say that they do not change, not that they cannot change. Neither in ancient nor in modern times has there been any lack of the most stupid people whose refinement is almost the same as that of animals. However, in fact they are different from animals, there is no one who cannot change.

⁷³ *Lunyu*, 17:3.

2.2.4.

Question: In Mencius' time Gao Zi and others established innumerable heterodox doctrines and therefore [Mencius] said unequivocally that nature is good. Confucius only said "not far apart" so as to warn people to be cautious in their behaviour. Was it not that since he did not proceed from a discussion of nature, it was not necessary for him to say explicitly that [nature] is good?

Answer: That is right. The words of the ancient worthies and sages are most easy to understand. For example, in colloquial speech in ancient as well as in modern times a most stupid person is often censured with a slip of the tongue as having no human nature; as soon as some germ of goodness is brought to attention it is said that he is still in possession of human nature. When people other than those who discourse on human nature take human nature as a designation of goodness, this accords with Mencius, whereas those who discourse on human nature miss [the meaning of Mencius]. To have no human nature is what is meant by [the words of Mencius] "other see his resemblance to birds and beasts",⁷⁴ and to be in possession of human nature is what is meant by "not far apart". The words "not far apart" in *The Analects* make clear that there is no one who lacks goodness. If you say [that someone's nature] is not good or the opposite of good, this would mean that they were far apart. How could it then be said that they are near to each other? After the separation of practice from nature there may be lack of goodness, but the lack of goodness cannot be derived from nature. Whenever someone receives nourishment or loses nourishment and becomes ensnared and trapped, this is part of practice. As to the most stupid people who do not change, they are beclouded from birth; for them it is difficult to understand goodness and easy to slip into evil. But actually their nature can also become enlightened and is not unchangeable. Thus, it is different from birds and beasts who cannot attain enlightenment.

⁷⁴ *Meng Zi*, 6A:8.

2.2.5.

Question: When Mencius discusses nature, he focuses on the four beginnings of humanity, righteousness, propriety, and wisdom. Is this different from Confucius who focuses on wisdom and stupidity?

Answer: As far as their differences are concerned men may in broad outline be compared in terms of how far apart they are with regard to enlightenment. If you are beclouded in certain areas, you may still attain enlightenment through study. Although men may be wise or stupid, they are, on the whole, not far apart; only few are very far apart with regard to wisdom and stupidity. Wisdom and stupidity are notions of varying degrees of closeness and are not mutually exclusive opposites. Goodness and evil on the other hand are designations of mutually exclusive opposites and do not refer to varying degrees of closeness. If you know that the completed nature of men may vary with regard to wisdom and stupidity, you also know that in case somebody indulges his stupidity and does not study and think, he will slip into evil. Stupidity is not evil, and it is thus clear that there is no man who lacks goodness. That [Confucius] focuses on wisdom and stupidity, while not touching on humanity or on propriety and righteousness, is because wisdom is sufficient to know the unchangeable laws of heaven and earth, men and things, facts and actions. If you do not attain the maximum of humanity and if you do not exclusively abide by propriety and righteousness, can we then say that you [grasp] the unchangeable laws? Mencius developed, but did not deviate from, the teaching of Confucius.

2.2.6.

Question: When Mencius talked about the goodness of nature, his disciple Gongdu Zi, who had already enumerated the three doctrines [concerning human nature], was confused not understanding that it is true that nature is good and the three doctrines are false.⁷⁵ Xun Zi came after Mencius, and he explicitly took nature to be evil while expounding his doctrine of extolling propriety and righteousness. Since Xun Zi knew to extol propriety and righteousness, he is manifestly different from Lao Zi who said, “propriety is a superficial expression of loyalty and faithfulness, and the beginning of disorder”⁷⁶ and from Gao Zi who considered righteousness as external. He had heard Mencius argue about the goodness of nature and must also have heard Mencius’ words, “the sages were only first to grasp that which all hearts approve of”.⁷⁷ Still he took exception from this doctrine. Why is that?

Answer: It was not that Xun Zi did not know that man can become a sage. Discussing the evil of nature he said:

Any man in the street can become [like the sage-king] Yu. [...] Any man in the street is capable of knowing the righteous relation between father and son at home and the correct relation between ruler and minister (outside:) in public life. [...] The man in the street possesses the faculty to know them [the ethical principles] and the ability to practise them, and so it is clear that he can become Yu. [...] If the man in the street applies himself to training and study, if he concentrates his heart and his unity of purpose, thinks thoroughly and discriminately, and if he accumulates goodness without stop, he can then attain spiritual enlightenment and form a trinity with heaven and earth. Thus, the sage is a man who has reached this stage through accumulated effort. [...] The sage can reach that stage through accumulated effort, but not everyone can do so. Why is this so? Everyone can do so, but not everyone can be made to do so. [...] It is true that the man in the street can become Yu, but the man in the street will not necessarily find it possible to do so, so this does not detract from the fact that he is capable of becoming Yu.⁷⁸

Not only does this not contradict the doctrine that nature is good, but it is even as if this and the other doctrine mutually complement and illuminate each other. Finally, Xun Zi concludes:

A person with two feet has the capacity to walk all over the world, and yet so far no one has found it possible to do so. There is a great difference between finding it practically possible or impossible to do something and to be capable or not capable of doing it.⁷⁹

⁷⁵ See *Mencius*, 6A:6.

⁷⁶ *Lao Zi*, 38; tr. Chan, *A Source Book*, p. 158.

⁷⁷ *Meng Zi*, 6A:7.

⁷⁸ *Xun Zi*, “Xing e”; tr. Chan, *A Source Book*, p. 134 mod.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

Thus, Xun Zi emphasizes study but he does not understand nature in its entirety. His purpose is to exalt the sages, emphasize study and extol propriety and righteousness. The chapter “Encouraging study”, which is placed at the head, states:

[The gentleman] reads and listens to explanations in order to penetrate [*dao*], ponders in order to understand it, associates with men who embody it in order to make it part of himself, and shuns those who impede it in order to sustain and nourish it.⁸⁰

It also says:

Pile up good deeds to create virtue and spiritual enlightenment will come of itself; in this the sages heart will find completion.⁸¹

This is how Xun Zi liked to talk about study. Besides he says that man can attain spiritual enlightenment and form a trinity with heaven and earth, that he knows the ultimate standard of propriety and righteousness, and that this is where the virtues of the sage and of heaven and earth are united. If a sage were to appear again – could this really alter these views? But in the final analysis he regards propriety and righteousness as totally separate from nature. He takes the sage to be different from ordinary men; propriety and righteousness to stem from the sage’s heart; and ordinary men to be able to grasp propriety and righteousness only after study. If nature followed its natural course without leading to strife – of what use would then propriety and righteousness be? Moreover, although everyone knows propriety and righteousness and has the capacity to practise these virtues, and although everyone can reach the state of sagehood through accumulated effort, he finds that these things can only result from study. What man can do without study he ascribes to nature, but what man can do only after study or what he may have the capacity to do without study but [in practice] cannot do he finds it impermissible to ascribe to nature. It is in this regard that he differs from Mencius.

⁸⁰ *Xun Zi*, “*Quan xue*”: tr. Burton Watson, p. 22.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*; tr. Watson, p. 18.

2.2.7.

Question: When Xun Zi regards propriety and righteousness as separate from and incompatible with nature, what is it in his view that makes them separate? Now, how can you know that he is wrong and that Mencius is right?

Answer: Xun Zi realizes that propriety and righteousness are the teachings of the sages, but he does not realize that propriety and wisdom also stem from nature. He realizes that propriety and righteousness mean understanding the necessary, but he does not realize that the necessary constitutes the ultimate standard of the natural and, in fact, brings the natural to completion. In the perspective of the book of Mencius, to understand *li* and righteousness is what constitutes [human] nature.⁸² Nature is explained in terms of humanity, righteousness, propriety, and wisdom, which are also taken to stem from that which is natural to [human] nature and which all men know without study; study only serves to develop [this knowledge]. When Xun Zi emphasizes study, [he proceeds from the assumption] that there is no [knowledge] inside [man] and that [knowledge] must be derived from outside [man]. When Mencius emphasizes study, [he proceeds from the assumption] that there is knowledge inside [man] and that one should rely on what is outside for developing [this knowledge]. That you can rely on drink and food for your body's blood and *qi* is because the *qi* on which you rely for nourishment as well as your body's original endowment of *qi* both have their origin in heaven and earth and are not two different things. So although you rely on what is outside, it may be transformed into blood and *qi* and thus enrich what is inside. It has never been the case that there is no original endowment of *qi* which is mutually compatible with [the *qi* that exists] outside and that only the latter is relied on [for nourishment]. Inquiry and study relate to moral nature in the same way. The self is in possession of moral nature, and to grasp the moral nature of the ancient worthies and sages through inquiry and study is to rely on the words of the ancient worthies and sages in order to enrich one's own moral nature. [One may] smelt metal so that it resembles water, but I have never heard that one uses metal to enrich water. So how can one say that the self originally possesses no goodness and no heavenly virtue and that it acquires goodness and becomes virtuous just like a vessel gets filled with water? Looked upon in this way, it is not the case that Mencius denies that what Xun Zi calls nature is nature. But Xun Zi focuses on the minor aspect while forgetting the major aspect, whereas Mencius explains the major aspect while not neglecting the minor aspect.

⁸² "To understand *li* and righteousness" (*ming li d'yi*) should be understood as "the capacity to understand *li* and righteousness".

2.2.8.

Question: Gao Zi says:

Inborn is what is meant by nature. [...] nature is neither good nor bad. [...] the appetite for food and sex constitutes nature. [...] Humanity is internal, righteousness is external.⁸³

Master Zhu finds these views similar to those of Shakyamuni. Master Zhu says: “‘Inborn’ refers to that by virtue of which men and animals possess consciousness and movement, which is similar to the view propounded by Buddhists in modern times that ‘function is nature’.”⁸⁴ He also says: “Gao Zi considers consciousness and movement as nature, and so he claims that man’s appetite for food and sex constitutes his nature.”⁸⁵ [Gao Zi’s] comparison with the *qi* willow and with whirling water [Master Zhu] finds similar to Xun [Zi] and to Yang [Xiong]. Master Zhu says concerning the comparison with the *qi* willow: “It is like Xun Zi’s doctrine that nature is evil.”⁸⁶ Concerning the comparison with whirling water he says: “It is close to Yang Zi’s doctrine that goodness and evil are mingled.”⁸⁷ Are then the views of Xun [Zi] and Yang [Xiong] also similar to those of Shakyamuni?

Answer: No they are not. That which Xun and Yang called nature has been called nature by people of ancient and modern times alike and constitutes that which later Confucians call “physical nature”. It is just that *li* and righteousness should not be left out and [nature] should not be considered as evil. In Mencius’ time Gongdu Zi quoted some who said “nature can become good or it can become bad”⁸⁸ and others who said “there are those who are good by nature and there are those who are bad by nature.”⁸⁹ The wording is different but it is the same nature that is referred to. Xun Zi realized that the innate spiritual enlightenment of the sages could not include everyone: Those who are beneath sages become good only after study; if they follow what comes natural to them, they will end up in evil and so add evil on to their nature. This doctrine seems one-sided and similar to the view that “there are those who are bad by nature”. Then when he calls propriety and righteousness the heart of the sage, this means that only the sage’s nature is good. In fact, this encompasses both doctrines [referred to] in the two quotations from Gongdu Zi. Yang Zi realized that he who cultivates goodness will become good and he

⁸³ *Meng Zi*, 6A:3–4.

⁸⁴ *Meng Zi ji-zhu*, 6A:3.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 6A:4.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 6A:1.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 6A:2.

⁸⁸ *Meng Zi*, 6A:6.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

who cultivates evil will become evil, and so he said that “man’s nature is a mixture of good and evil”⁹⁰ and also that “if you study you will become correct, if not you will end up in perverseness”.⁹¹ This seems incongruent with Xun Zi’s doctrine but is in fact no different from it. Master Han says:

The three grades of nature are: the superior, the medium, and the inferior. The superior is good, and good only. The medium may be led to be either superior or inferior. The inferior is evil and evil only.⁹²

This brings the two quotations from Gongdu Zi together into one conception. Master Zhu says:

Physical nature does differ in terms of beauty and evil, but in terms of its beginnings, men are not very far apart. Those who practise goodness will become good, and those who practise evil will become evil. It is only after this that men become far apart. [...] Physical nature causes men to be near to each other but also [to differ in terms of] beauty and evil. Once fixed, this difference cannot be altered through practice.⁹³

He just combines the two quotations from Gongdu Zi to explain *The Analects*. Master Cheng says:

There are those who are good from infancy, and there are those who are evil, because such is the physical endowment. Goodness is indeed [a property of] nature, but evil must also be considered as such.⁹⁴

The Collected Sayings of Master Zhu say: “Question: ‘Evil is [a property of] the physical endowment. Why is it then that it must also be called [a property of] nature?’ Answer: ‘Since it is [a property of] the physical endowment, it also causes nature to be bad. Nature is only appended to the physical endowment, so when the physical endowment becomes bad, nature too becomes bad.’”⁹⁵ It also says: “It is just as when water becomes muddled with mud: it must still be called water.”⁹⁶ This is the same as saying that there are those who are good by nature and there are those who are evil by nature, and it is not incompatible with saying that nature can become good or it can become bad. It is only that the one [Gongdu Zi] holds on to the notion of nature whereas the others [Cheng and Zhu] distinguish [this aspect of] nature as the physical endowment.

⁹⁰ Yang Xiong, *Fayan*, “Xiushen”; tr. Chan, *A Source Book*, p. 289.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, “Xuexing.”

⁹² “Yuanxing”, *Han Changli quanji*; tr. Chan, *A Source Book*, pp. 451–452.

⁹³ *Lunyu jizhu*, 17:3.

⁹⁴ *Henan Cheng shi yishu*, *juan* 1, in *Er Cheng ji*, p. 11.

⁹⁵ *Zhu Zi yulei*, *juan*, 95.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

Master Cheng also says:

It is not permitted to speak about what is before “as man is born he is still”. When we speak about nature it is already no longer nature.⁹⁷

Master Zhu explains this saying.

What is before “as man is born he is still” is [the state when] men and animals were not yet been born. This can only be called *li* and cannot be designated as nature. This is what is meant [by saying] “In heaven it is called the decree”. When we speak about nature this refers to [the state] after man is born. This is when *li* has already descended into form and *qi* and is no longer the original substance of nature. This is what is meant by saying “in man it is called nature”.⁹⁸

According to *The Book of Rites*, “as man is born he is still” should be juxtaposed to “when he is acted upon by external things he moves”.⁹⁹ This refers to [the state] when man has not been acted upon, not to [the state] before men and animals were born. The sentence “the decree of heaven is what is meant by nature”¹⁰⁰ in *The Doctrine of the Mean* means that the differences and limitations in physical endowment between individuals are determined from birth and that it is not so that [one and the same] *li* has different names in heaven and in man. According to their doctrine it was when Mencius went back to the stage before men and animals are born and before the term nature may be used that he said that nature is good. Had it referred to the stage when the term nature may be used, this would be after men and animals are born and [nature] has already descended into form and *qi* – and how could it then be good? Understood in this way it is, in the whole world and at all times, only the nature of supreme sages that has not lost its substance. All beneath these have lost the essence of human nature. If man is considered as man without reference to his physical endowment or substance – how can he then be said to be a man? This is why Mencius says that there is no man who is not good and why Cheng and Zhu say that there is no man who is not evil. They have a majestic view of *li* as if it were a thing and they attribute goodness to *li*. Although they appear to follow the words Mencius on the goodness of nature, in fact Mencius talked about this in reference to man, whereas Cheng and Zhu talk emptily about this *li* divorced from man. Thus, they comment on Mencius and say that it is incomplete to talk about *li* and not about *qi*. If they would not regard *li* as if it were a thing but consider it as bad when it appears in the physical substance, it would be difficult to agree with the unequivocal

⁹⁷ *Henan Cheng shi yishu*, juan 1, in *Er Cheng ji*, 1, p. 11; “as man is born he is still” is a quotation from *Liji*, “Yueji”, 1:1.

⁹⁸ *Zhu Zi yulei*, juan, 95.

⁹⁹ Cf. *Liji*, “Yueji”, 1:1.

¹⁰⁰ *Zhongyong*, 1.

conclusion of Mencius that [nature] is good. The doctrines of the Song Confucians may seem to be in agreement with Mencius but are in fact different; they may seem to differ from but are in fact in agreement with Xun Zi.

Mencius did not say that there is no nature that is not good, but that there is no man that is not good. Nature is a term common to creatures flying in the air, living under water and moving on land as well as to plants. "Nature is good" refers to human nature. As far as creatures flying in the air, moving on land and plants are concerned the nature of each species is distinguished by its category of *qi*. Men and things partake of *yin* and *yang* and the five phases and this [allotment] makes up their nature. With no category of *qi* there can no longer be any notion of nature. When a medical doctor prescribes medicine he carefully distinguishes [the patient's] specific category of *qi*. If he would not distinguish the specific nature, he might kill someone. If someone would say that this specific category of *qi* is no longer nature – would a medical doctor believe it? For example, look at peaches and apricots: You take their stones and plant them. So they sprout, their shells crack, and stems, branches, and leaves grow, they blossom and bear fruit. With regard to form, colour, smell, and taste, a peach is not an apricot and an apricot is not a peach. There is not one single fruit that cannot be identified as either of the two. This is how it is with differences in nature. Nature exists in the kernel of the stone, that is what in common speech is known as peach almonds or apricot almonds; all possess form, colour, smell, and taste. It is necessary to know the nature of any plant, grain, flower, or tree, and of any beast, bird, insect, or fish. When you know its nature and specific category of *qi*, you can make them flourish and reproduce. Why should one only with regard to man and his nature, which he acquires by an allotment of *yin* and *yang* and the five phases, say, "this is no longer nature." Can this really be so?

As far as the nature of man and the hundred things is concerned each [species] has, since ancient times to the present, had its specific category of *qi*. Concerning [creatures] of blood and *qi* specifically, not only is the category of *qi* specific for each [species] but so is consciousness. That man differs from birds and beasts by virtue of possessing [the qualities] propriety and righteousness means, in fact, that man's consciousness reaches much further than that of animals. This is why Mencius said that nature is good. However, Xun Zi regarded propriety and righteousness as unattainable for the hearts of ordinary men and so attributed these exclusively to the sages. Master Cheng and Master Zhu saw that there are few who know from birth how to proceed [towards sagehood], and so they made the comment that the physical substance cannot be said to be universally good. This was actually the view of Xun and Yang. Specifically for this reason they turned their backs on Mencius and distinguished physical substance as one kind of nature, while saying that a gentleman would not call it nature. And they distinguished *li* and

righteousness as another kind of nature which they attributed to heaven in order to be in accord with Mencius. The reason why they attributed it to heaven and not to the sages was that, if *li* were taken as given to the self by a man, this *li* would be something that the self did not originally possess. But if *li* is taken as given to the self by heaven, then it is almost attached to the self and merges with it as one. This is to define the concept [of *li*] in terms of heaven so that when you hear about it, you will not be in doubt as to whether you possessed it from the beginning. Then you may believe that it was given to you from the beginning and consider its reception as original.

Xun Zi for one saw that study may not cease, but why study if [man] originally does not lack [goodness]? Master Cheng and Master Zhu on the other hand also saw that study may not cease. They held that [man] originally possesses [goodness], so why [did they also hold] that man should study? Thus they declared that [*li*] is “polluted by the physical substance” so as to be able to transform [the doctrine that man] originally possesses [goodness] into the doctrine that he originally lacks goodness. So the notion of nature was changed and *li* was added to it; the idea that the transformation of *qi* generates man and things was detrimental to [their notion of] nature. Nature was compared to the clarity of water being polluted by mud. Master Cheng says: “Some [water] flows right to the sea without ever being polluted; this needs no labour to keep it clear. Some is certain to get progressively muddier before it has gone far; some gets muddy only after it has gone a long distance. Some has plenty of mud, some only a little; although the muddy water is different from the clear, it must still be recognized as water. This being so, it is necessary that man should accept the duty of cleansing and regulating it. The water will be cleaned quickly if his efforts are prompt and bold, slowly if he is careless. But when it is cleaned it is still only the original water; it is not that clear water has been fetched to replace the muddy water, nor that the muddy water has been taken away and put on one side. The clarity of the water corresponds to the goodness of nature.”¹⁰¹ What they did was just to follow Lao, Zhuang, and Shakyamuni, who had said that the True Master and True Emptiness are beclouded by desire after receiving form, and so changed their doctrines. But the former [the Daoists and the Buddhists] held that the True Master and True Emptiness constitute the self, whereas the latter [Cheng and Zhu] still considered the physical substance to constitute the self; since they found it difficult to say that nature does not constitute the self, they could only attribute it to heaven [and argue that] after heaven has imparted it to the self, it can be said to be a part of the self and to be a complete and self-sufficient thing, and be judged as good. Only after separating it [nature] from the self, [could they] blame the self for damaging it and demand study as a means to restore it, although what heaven had imparted was complete and self-sufficient. So they compared nature to the clarity of water; they compared the pollution of nature descended into form

¹⁰¹ *Henan Cheng shi yishu*, juan 1, in *Er Cheng ji*, 1, pp. 11–12; tr. A.C. Graham, *Two Chinese Philosophers*, p. 132.

and *qi* to the muddiness of polluted water; and they compared study to the cleansing of water till it becomes clear. When water is still it may be clear, and this is why Lao, Zhuang, and Shakyamuni place the main emphasis on having no desires and on quiescence. Accordingly, they [Cheng and Zhu] changed their doctrines so that they came to emphasize seriousness and the preservation of *li*, thus corresponding to Shakyamuni's teaching that you should recognize your original state as well as his teaching that you should always be alert. For example, the ancient worthies and sages studied extensively [the way to be sincere], inquired into it accurately, thought it over carefully, sifted it clearly and practised it earnestly.¹⁰² If you follow this and develop it to completion – how can this be only to cleanse [nature] till it becomes clear? Having been students of Lao, Zhuang, and Shakyamuni, Master Cheng and Master Zhu turned their teachings into a weapon against them. But when they changed and said that the Six Classics and Confucius and Mencius were right, they differed little from Xun Zi and negated the Six Classics and Confucius and Mencius.

¹⁰² *Zhongyong*, 20.

2.2.9.

Question: Mencius says:

The way the mouth is disposed towards tastes, the eye towards colours, the ear towards sounds, the nose towards smells, and the four limbs towards ease is human nature, yet therein also lies the decree. That is why the gentleman does not describe it as nature. The way humanity pertains to the relation between father and son, righteousness to the relation between ruler and minister, propriety to the relation between guest and host, wisdom to the worthy, and the sage to the *dao* of heaven, is the decree, but therein also lies human nature. That is why the gentleman does not describe it as the decree.¹⁰³

The doctrine of the Song Confucians that physical nature is not [human] nature has its root here. Master Zhang says:

With the existence of physical form there exists physical nature. If one skillfully returns to the original nature endowed by heaven and earth, then it will be preserved. Therefore in physical nature there is that which the superior man denies to be his original nature.¹⁰⁴

Master Cheng says:

To discuss nature and not discuss *qi* would be incomplete. To discuss *qi* and not discuss nature would not be clear.¹⁰⁵

While Cheng and Zhu take *li* to be that which Mencius calls goodness, they criticize this as incomplete. Master Zhu says: "When Mencius says that nature is good, he talks about nature but not about *qi*. [...] Xun and Yang, and those who came after them, talked about *qi* but not nature. [...] Mencius was, in the final analysis, incomplete and so has not been able to silence Xun and Yang.¹⁰⁶ But when the disposition towards tastes, colours, sounds, smells, and ease is taken as nature, it cannot be denied that this refers to the physical substance, and so this is considered as merely the way ordinary men speak. Master Zhu says: "Ordinary men take the former five as nature, [...] the latter five as the decree."¹⁰⁷ They cannot deny that the statement "by nature men are near to each other" refers to the physical substance; in this way ordinary men would be in accord with Confucius whereas Mencius would hold on to a different doctrine. Answering one of his disciples, Master Zhu said:

¹⁰³ Meng Zi, 7B:24; tr. Lau, *Mencius*, pp. 198–199, mod.

¹⁰⁴ Zhang Zai, *Zhengmeng*, "Chengming"; tr. Wing-tsit Chan, *Reflections on Things at Hand*, pp. 72–73.

¹⁰⁵ *Henan Cheng shi yishu*, juan 6; cf. Graham, *Two Chinese Philosophers*, p. 133.

¹⁰⁶ *Zhu Zi yulei*, juan 59, 62.

¹⁰⁷ *Meng Zi jizhu*, 7B:24.

The doctrine of physical substance stems from Zhang and Cheng. In his "On the Origin of Nature" Han Tuizhi talked about the three degrees but he never clearly stated that this referred to the physical nature. When Mencius said that nature is good, he only referred to the original root and never talked about the physical nature. Thus he too wasted energy in making distinctions. Among [the hundred] philosophers some said that nature is evil and others that nature is a mixture of good and evil. If the doctrine of Zhang and Cheng had appeared earlier, many disputes would have been unnecessary.¹⁰⁸

Here again Xun [Zi], Yang [Xiong], and Han [Yu] are considered to be in accord with Confucius. When we come to Gao Zi he also often quoted [the statement] "by nature men are near to each other" to prove his doctrine "inborn is what is meant by nature". If Gao Zi had clearly referred to the physical nature, Mencius could only have disputed this. Confucius never talked about physical nature; is he really unclear in the same way as Xun and Yang by speaking about *qi* and not about nature? Master Cheng severely criticizes Xun and Yang for not knowing nature. Master Cheng said: "Xun Zi is extremely one-sided, he only says that nature is evil and so misses the great root. Although Yang Zi errs little, he too does not know nature, not to speak about *dao*."¹⁰⁹ He does so in order to show how his doctrine that nature is *li* differs from Xun and Yang. The statement "by nature men are near to each other" appears in *The Analects* and although Master Cheng says "*li* is good all through, [...] how could [men] be near to each other?",¹¹⁰ he dares not criticize it as he criticizes Xun and Yang. However, if this had been a statement by someone else than Confucius, he would have been criticized for not knowing nature. Now you consider Mencius to be like Confucius; [you consider] Cheng and Zhu to be like Xun and Yang; [you consider] both Confucius and Mencius to refer to the material endowment and the physical substance [when they use the word "nature"]; and [you consider] the material endowment and the physical substance of man to differ from animals in that [man's] heart can open up and reach understanding so that, when he acts according to it [his material endowment and physical substance], he will not err. Thus you refer to it [the material endowment and physical substance] as *li* and righteousness. Cheng and Zhu consider *li* as if it were a thing and then, in fact, mix [their words] with the words of Lao, Zhuang, and Shakyamuni. The learning of Cheng and Zhu probably stems from [the school of] Lao and Shakyamuni and then entered [the schools of] Xun and Yang. Is it not the case that what they refer to as nature is not what Confucius and Mencius referred to as nature, and what they refer to as the physical nature is what Xun and Yang referred to as nature?

¹⁰⁸ Zhu Zi yulei, juan 4.

¹⁰⁹ Henan Cheng shi yishu, juan 18.

¹¹⁰ Lunyu jizhu, 17:2.

Answer: That is right. Man's blood and *qi* and his mental faculty have their origin in the transformation of heaven and earth. Possessing blood and *qi* man relies on sounds, colours, smells and tastes for nourishing these. Possessing a mental faculty there are the relationships between father and son, brothers, man and wife, and there is affection not limited to one family. Then there are the relationships between ruler and minister and between friends. With the five bonds of mutual affection and regulations, man responds, when acted upon, through pleasure, anger, sorrow, or joy. Uniting the desire for sounds, colours, smells, and tastes with the feelings of pleasure, anger, sorrow, and joy, the *dao* of men becomes complete. Desires stem from blood and *qi* and are therefore referred to as nature, but there are certain limits which they must not transgress, and so they are referred to as the decree. Humanity, righteousness, propriety, and wisdom – due to limitations from the time of birth these beautiful virtues cannot be realized by everyone to the same degree. This is what is meant by the decree. But everyone can develop them and this is man's nature. Mencius' comment on [the statement] "[inborn is] what is meant by nature" amounts to saying that [Gao Zi] uses [the notion of] nature as a pretext. The gentleman does not use the notion of nature as a pretext for indulging his desires, nor does he use the notion of restrictions placed by the decree as a pretext for not realizing his capacity. Later Confucians have not carefully examined the meaning of the text and have thus missed the point of his ideas. When he says that [the gentleman] does not describe it as [human] nature, this is not to say that it should not be called [human] nature; and when he says that [the gentleman] does not describe it as the decree, this is not to say that it should not be called the decree. Looked at in this way, what Mencius refers to as nature is constituted by the way the mouth is disposed towards tastes, the eye towards colours, the ear towards sounds, the nose towards smells, and the four limbs towards ease. When he says that there is no man who is not good, this means that man's ability to know his limits and not transgress them constitutes his goodness. What he refers to as humanity, righteousness, propriety, and wisdom are virtues, designating man's blood and *qi*, which he says originate from heaven and earth and can assist these. This is something Xun and Yang never understood. Lao, Zhuang, and Shakyamuni were muddled on this point and so their explanations were strained.

Chapter 3

3.1. Capacity. Three sections.

3.1.1.

Through capacity (*cai*) man and the hundred things assume form and substance in accordance with their nature, and then their intelligence and ability are differentiated and distinguished. This is what Mencius called “capacity endowed by heaven”.¹ The transformation of *qi* produces men and things. In terms of the restriction of their allotment of *qi* this is called decree; in terms of the root and beginning of men and things it is called nature; and in terms of the physical substance it is called capacity. Because the completed nature of each one is different, capacity is also different. It is through capacity that nature manifests itself. Without capacity where can one see that which is called nature?

If men and things are compared to objects, capacity constitutes the material of the object. The allotment of *yin* and *yang* and the five phases is different for each one, and so capacity is also different. This is like forging gold and tin. When gold is forged into an object, it becomes a thing of gold. When tin is forged into an object, it becomes a thing of tin. This is how different kinds of objects differ. Further examined in this light, the quality of that gold or tin which constitutes the material of the concrete thing is just like that gold and tin which is forged. This is how there are differences within one and the same category. To be of gold and tin, and the quality of this gold and tin, may be compared to nature. The allotment of the five metals and what makes an object to be that object, which constitutes a restriction, may be compared to the decree. Differentiating between instruments – Which are made of gold and which are made of tin? Which are excellent and which are not? — this may be compared to capacity. Therefore, the beauty or evil of capacity neither adds to nor detracts from nature. Once gold and tin have been turned into concrete things, these do not change. But man is more advanced. From sages and down – how many different grades [of capacity] are there?

There are some who suspect that man’s capacity is not all excellent. But this is not so. It is like the five metals: gold is the most precious and so, although it may not be beautiful, there is no other metal which can be compared to it in

¹ *Meng Zi*, 6A:7.

terms of preciousness. Likewise, any man can become a worthy or a sage. Later Confucians ascribe lack of goodness to the physical endowment. What Mencius called nature and capacity referred to nothing but the physical endowment. Endowment in its completeness constitutes nature, and the physical substance in its completeness constitutes capacity. For example, the nature of a peach or an apricot is complete in the kernels of their stones; there is no form, colour, smell or taste that is not contained therein, although these cannot be seen. When the budding sprouts burst forth, however, the stems, branches and leaves of the apricot become different. From this to flowers and fruits, their forms, colours and taste are all differentiated and distinguished. Although nature makes them what they are, they all rely on capacity to be seen. As nature is completed, there is this capacity. Separately we speak about decree, nature, capacity, but taken together it is called heavenly nature. Thus, Mencius says:

Our [physicall] form and colour constitute heavenly nature. Only he who has become a sage can realize his form in practice.²

The completed nature of men is different from that of animals and things, and so their forms and colours are also different. The form of man is far more advanced than the form of animals and things as far as the functions of the [bodily] organs are concerned. That the *dao* pursued by man cannot be flawless means that his form is not fully realized in practice – just as speaking about something which does not become materialized means that one's words are not realized in practice. To realize one's form in practice has the same meaning as giving full realization to one's nature or giving full realization to one's capacity.

² *Meng Zi*, 7A:38.

3.1.2.

Question: Mencius says in answer to Gongdu Zi:

As far as his *qing* (feelings, true nature) is concerned, man can be good. This is what is meant by saying that human nature is good. As for his becoming bad, this is not the fault of his capacity [or natural endowment].³

Master Zhu says:

Qing (feelings) are movements of nature.⁴

He also says:

Commiseration, shame and dislike, deference and compliance, right and wrong – these are feelings; humanity, righteousness, propriety, and wisdom – these are [part of] nature. The heart commands nature and feelings. [...] Thanks to the arousal of the feelings the original state of nature may be seen.⁵

When Gongdu Zi asks about nature and enumerates three doctrines that differ from Mencius who says that nature is good, then [Mencius in Zhu Xi's view] discusses feelings apart from nature, basing himself one-sidedly on the [four] beginnings [of goodness] as evidence. This is Xun Xi's doctrine that nature is evil:

The nature of man is such that he is born with a fondness for profit. If he indulges this fondness, it will lead him into wrangling and strife, and [all sense of] deference and compliance will disappear. He is born with feelings of envy and hate, and if he indulges these, they will lead him into violence and crime, and [all sense of] loyalty and faithfulness will disappear. Man is born with the desires of the eyes and ears, with a fondness for beautiful sights and sounds. If he indulges these, they will lead him into license and wantonness, and [all sense of] propriety and righteousness and of correct forms will be lost. Hence, any man who follows his nature and indulges his feelings will inevitably become involved in wrangling and strife, will violate the forms rules of society, and will end up as a criminal. Therefore, man must first be transformed by the instructions of a teacher and guided by propriety and

³ *Meng Zi*, 6A:6. Wing-tsit Chan adds the following note to his translation of this passage: "Note that *ch'ing* [*qing*] here does not mean feelings which are sources of evil desires, as understood by later Confucianists, but feelings proper to the originally good nature of man. As Tai Chen [Dai Chen] has clearly pointed out in his *Meng Tzu tzu-i shu-cheng* [*Meng Zi ziyi shuzheng*] (Commentary on the Meanings of Terms in the Book of Mencius), sec., 30, *ch'ing* is the original simple substance, not contrasted with nature." (*A Source Book*, p. 54). The meaning of *qing* in the quote from *Meng Zi* is the topic of Dai Zhens's discussion in this section. We may note that Karlgren says that *qing* in *Meng Zi* means "quality, proper nature" (*Grammata Serica Recensa*, 812').

⁴ *Meng Zi jizhu*, 6A:6.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 2A:6.

righteousness, and only then will he be able to be deferent and compliant, obey the forms and rules of society, and achieve order. In this perspective it is clear that human nature is evil [...].⁶

When Xun Zi here argues that nature is evil he also brings up feelings [as evidence], so how can we say that Mencius is right but Xun Zi mistaken?

Answer: From birth man possesses desires, feelings, and intelligence. These three are natural to blood and *qi* and to the mental faculty. Desires are activated by sound, colour, smell, and taste, and so there is love and there is fear. Feelings are manifested as pleasure, anger, sorrow, and joy, and so there is distress and there is happiness. Intelligence can identify beauty and ugliness, right and wrong, and so there is like and there is dislike. The desires for sound, colour, smell, and taste are relied on to nourish life. The feelings of pleasure, anger, sorrow, and joy arise from the encounter with [external] objects. The intelligence to identify beauty and ugliness, right and wrong, when at its height, comprehends the negative and positive forces of heaven and earth. The differentiation between love and fear of sound, colour, smell, and taste is determined by the production and conquest of the five phases. The differentiation between distress and happiness [manifested as] pleasure, anger, sorrow, and joy is determined by the opportuness of the situation. The differentiation between like and dislike of beauty and ugliness, right and wrong is determined by the will. This all pertains to completed nature. When there is a body, there are also desires for sound, colour, smell, and taste; when there is a body and there also exist the bonds between ruler and minister, father and son, man and wife, elder and younger brother, and between friends, then there are also feelings of pleasure, anger, sorrow, and joy. It is only when there are desires, feelings, and intelligence that your desires may attain satisfaction and your feelings fulfilment. If desires attained satisfaction and feelings fulfilment, where would no longer be any misfortune in the world. Man's intelligence can, when little, grasp the supreme standard of beauty and ugliness and, when great, the supreme standard of right and wrong. He who attains satisfaction of his own desires may extend this and bring about satisfaction of the desires of others; he who attains fulfilment of his own feelings may widen this and bring about fulfilment of the feelings of others. If the desires of men were all satisfied and the feelings all fulfilled, then virtue would prevail. Desires err in selfishness, and with selfishness there will be perverseness. Feelings err in partiality, and with partiality there will be misconduct. Intelligence errs in obscuration, and with obscuration there will be mistakes. With no selfishness, desires will all be humane and conform to

⁶ Xun Zi, "Xing e"; Watson, Hsün Tzu. Basic Writings, p. 157 mod.

propriety and righteousness. With no partiality, feelings will necessarily be unassuming and generous. With no obscuration, intelligence will attain what is called brightness and sagely wisdom.

Mencius referred to the heart of commiseration, shame and dislike, deference and compliance, right and wrong in terms of the heart, not in terms of the feelings. When at first he says “as far as his *qing* is concerned”, this is not *qing* as in *xingqing* (nature and feelings). Does Mencius not also say:

People seeing his resemblance to an animal will think that he never had any capacity [for goodness]. But can that really be his *qing* (original character)?⁷

Qing means “original”, “genuine”. Mencius considers nature as originally good but says that man “can be good”. That he says “can” is because nature varies [among men], but as far as judging it as good, no one has been known not to be able to [be good]. When Mencius later says “this is what is meant by saying that nature is good”,⁸ this refers to what [Gongdu Zi] had said earlier:

As for his becoming bad, this is not the fault of his capacity.⁹

When someone finally becomes bad, his heart has degenerated and he has lost his conscience to the point of being completely dried up, not much different from an animal. Speaking about capacity nature becomes manifest, and speaking about nature capacity becomes manifest – This is because capacity has nothing which adds to or detracts from nature.

Human nature is good, and so his capacity is also beautiful. When it often [appears] not beautiful, this is always caused by the degeneration of the heart. Therefore he says:

It is not the capacity endowed by heaven that is different.¹⁰

Capacity is beautiful to begin with but may end up not beautiful. You cannot say that nature is good to begin with but may end up not good. Nature refers to the origin and beginning, capacity to actual talents. If actual talents are damaged this is in fact not the fault of the talents – and how much less could we blame the origin and the beginning! For example, the Song Confucians say “nature is the same as *li*”,¹¹ and they say:

⁷ *Meng Zi*, 6A:8; tr. Lau, Mencius, p. 165 mod.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 6A:6.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 6A:7.

¹¹ *Zhu Zi yulei*, juan 5.

After man's birth this *li* has descended into form and *qi* and no longer constitutes the original essence of nature.¹²

In comparison, when [someone's] nature has degenerated and dried up so that people see that he is not good, Mencius still says "this is not the fault of his capacity",¹³ whereas the Song Confucians lay the blame on capacity – "capacity endowed by heaven".

¹² *Ibid.*, juan 95.

¹³ *Meng Zi*, 6A:6.

3.1.3.

Question: The capacity of any man in the world, in ancient or in modern times, has some penchant. Roughly speaking, those who have a penchant for purity are kind and faithful, prudent and gentle; they follow examples of goodness and feel shame over evil. Those who have a penchant for clarity attain broad vision and understanding, are not deluded by appearances and do not get stuck in conventional wisdom; for them, too, it is easy to be good and to discard evil. These [two penchants] may perhaps not exist together but they are both [examples of] the beauty of capacity. Although capacity is beautiful, it is often not free from partiality and selfishness. Master Zhou discusses nature and says:

Righteousness, uprightness, decisiveness, strictness, and firmness of action are examples of strength that is good; fierceness, narrow-mindedness, and violence are examples of strength that is evil. Kindness, mildness, and humility are examples of weakness that is good; indecision, and perverseness are examples of weakness that is evil.¹⁴

[Zhou argues that] only the sage reaches harmony in the mean; this is to show forth the evil of capacity. Master Cheng says:

There is no nature that is not good. It is capacity that may be not good. Nature is the same as *li*, and *li* is the same, from Yao and Shun to the man in the street. Capacity constitutes an endowment of *qi*, and *qi* may be clear or turbid. Those who are endowed with clear *qi* are wise, while those endowed with turbid *qi* are stupid.¹⁵

Here [Master Cheng] is out to attribute evil to capacity and to distinguish between nature and capacity as two roots. Master Zhu says that this is more complete and thorough than [the explanation of] Mencius. Master Zhu says: "Master Cheng's explanation of the character *cai* (capacity) differs little from the original text of Mencius. In his discussion, Mencius specifically points out that it issues from nature and therefore he holds that no capacity is not good. Master Cheng, in his discussion specifically points out that since it constitutes an endowment of *qi*, people's capacities differ with regard to clarity and strength. Although the two explanations differ, each one contains what is right. But examined in terms of reason, Master Cheng's [explanation] seems more complete and thorough.¹⁶ He even criticizes Mencius and says:

¹⁴ Zhou Dunyi, *Tong Shu*, juan 7; tr. Chan, *A Source Book*, p. 468 mod.

¹⁵ *Henan Cheng shi yishu*, juan 18:17B; in *Er Cheng ji*, 1, p. 204; tr. Chan, *A Source Book*, p. 567. Except for the first two sentences Zhu Xi quotes this passage in *Meng Zi jizhu*, 6A:6.

¹⁶ *Meng Zi jizhu*, 6A:6.

[T]o discuss nature and not discuss *qi* is incomplete.¹⁷

This is sufficient to prove that although the Song Confucians honoured Mencius, they in fact contradicted him. But is not the evil that Master Zhou discusses in fact the fault of capacity?

Answer: No, it is the fault of partiality and selfishness, so capacity cannot be blamed, and even less can you say that nature [is not good]. Mencius said that capacity is like completed nature; if nature is good, capacity is also beautiful. He did not say that [only] when there is no partiality and selfishness is there goodness and beauty. If someone newly born does not eat, he will die. If someone in infancy does not study, he will be stupid. The purpose of eating is to nourish the person's life, to make him develop and grow; the purpose of study is to nourish his innate powers, to make him develop until he becomes a worthy or a sage. The principle is the same. The beauty of capacity may be compared to a piece of fine jade. If you treasure it, it will look brighter and newer from day to day and shine for a long time. By keeping it as a treasure you may strengthen its original qualities. But if you scratch and scrape it, or throw it aside without care, it will with the passage of time become damaged and lose its lustre. Keeping it in this way you may diminish its original qualities. [The beauty of capacity] may also be compared to men and animals who, at the time of birth, are not ill but who later contract a number of illnesses from each other. Among those who easily fall ill some contract the illness from external factors, whereas others fall ill as a result of the struggle among the five *qi* of *yin* and *yang*. This indicates that an illness always breaks out inside the body. However, one cannot say that heaven has imparted a body with many illnesses. For example, when Master Zhou speaks about fierceness, narrow-mindedness, and violence and about softness, indecision, and perverseness, this is to seek defects in capacity. Although capacity is beautiful, it will indeed have these defects if it gets no nourishment. Has not Mencius in fact explained the reason for this? Effects of lack of nourishment cannot be made the bases for describing man's capacity. And what cannot describe man's capacity can even less describe nature.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

3.2 Dao. Four sections.

3.2.1.

The *dao* of men refers to all aspects of daily activities in human relations. With regard to heaven and earth the flowing movement of the transformation of *qi*, which produces and reproduces without pause, constitutes what is meant by *dao*. With regard to men and things, all facts pertaining to production and reproduction – endless just like the transformation of *qi* – constitute what is meant by *dao*. *The Book of Changes* says:

Yin and *yang* in alternation are what is meant by *dao*. What succeeds *dao* is goodness, and what completes it is [the individual] nature.¹⁸

This is to say that the existence of men and things depends on the *dao* of heaven. *The Book of Rites of the Elder Dai* says:

What is divided from *dao* is called the decree. What takes form in individuals is called nature.¹⁹

This is to say that since men and things are divided from *dao*, they are not identical. *The Doctrine of the Mean* says:

The decree of heaven is what is meant by nature. To follow one's nature is what is meant by *dao*.²⁰

This is to say that any fact or activity in daily life originates in [human] nature and is without exception rooted in the *dao* of heaven.

The Doctrine of the Mean also says:

The relationship between ruler and minister, father and son, husband and wife, elder and younger brother, and between friends – these five are the universal *dao* in the world.²¹

This is to say that the great norm of man's actions, of any fact in daily life, never goes beyond these five [relationships]. Mencius stated:

¹⁸ *Yijing*, "Xici", A:5, tr. Chan, *A Source Book*, p. 266 mod.

¹⁹ *Da Dai Liji*, juan 80.

²⁰ *Zhongyong*, 1.

²¹ *Zhongyong*, 20.

[He appointed] Xie to be minister of education and teach people human relations: affection between father and son, righteousness between ruler and minister, separation between [the different roles of] husband and wife, proper order between old and young, and faithfulness between friends.²²

This means the same as these words in *The Doctrine of the Mean*:

To cultivate *dao* is what is meant by education.²³

Nature and *dao* are notions that refer to concrete substances and concrete facts. Humanity, propriety, and righteousness are notions that designate purity, equilibrium, and correctness. The *dao* of men is rooted in [human] nature, and [human] nature has its origin in the *dao* of heaven.²⁴ With regard to heaven and earth, the flowing movement of the transformation of *qi* is without end, and production and reproduction is without pause. But he who was born on land will die in water, and he who was born in water will die away from water. He who was born in the south is accustomed to heat and will not endure the cold, and he who was born in the north is accustomed to the cold and will not endure heat. What some rely on as nourishment will harm others.

The great characteristic of heaven and earth is to produce.²⁵

When creatures and things do not live on but die – does this really mark the loss of this fundamental character of heaven and earth? Therefore, speaking about *dao* with regard to heaven and earth, *dao* shows itself in concrete substance and concrete facts. This is the meaning of the saying:

Yin and *yang* in alternation are what is established as the *dao* of heaven, the weak and the strong as the *dao* of earth.²⁶

Man's mental faculty may be enlightened or beclouded. When enlightened, it will not err; when beclouded it will err through misapprehension. Therefore, speaking about *dao* with regard to men, all the daily activities in human relations constitute concrete facts of *dao*. This is what it means [when *The Doctrine of the Mean* says] that to follow one's nature is what is meant by *dao*;²⁷ that the cultivation of the person is to be done by means of *dao*;²⁸ and

²² *Meng Zi*, 3A:4.

²³ *Zhongyong*, 1.

²⁴ This is a clear example of Dai Zhen's naturalism.

²⁵ *Yijing*, "Xici", B; tr. Chan, *A Source Book*, p. 268.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, "Xici", A and "Shuogua"; tr. Chan, *A Source Book*, p. 269 mod.

²⁷ *Zhongyong*, 1.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 20.

that there are five universal *dao* in human relations.²⁹ What is called *dao* in these [sayings] must be cultivated. This is what it means [when *The Doctrine of the Mean* says] that the cultivation of *dao* is to be done by means of humanity³⁰ and that the sage cultivates *dao* in order to teach it. The purity, equilibrium, and correctness of [*dao*] is what is meant [when *The Book of Changes* says] that humanity and righteousness are established as the *dao* of men and that when [feelings are aroused and] attain their due measure and degree, this is the universal *dao*.³¹ The attainment of the due measure and degree constitutes the universal *dao* of purity, equilibrium, and correctness, which are valid also when extended to all people in the world. The five [relationships] between ruler and minister, father and son, husband and wife, older and younger brother, and between friends constitute the universal *dao* but represent only concrete facts. If wisdom, humanity, and courage are used to follow it, then purity, equilibrium, and correctness will ensue. But it is called the universal *dao*, because it reaches everyone in the world and cannot be discarded. *The Book of Changes* proceeds from discussing the *dao* of heaven to discussing men and things. Not only does it say that “what completes it is nature” but first it says that “what succeeds it is goodness”.³² “Succeeds” means that men and things relate to heaven and earth so that their goodness succeeds and is inalienable from [heaven and earth]. “Goodness” is a notion that designates purity, equilibrium, and correctness. “Nature” is a notion that refers to concrete substance and concrete facts. When something is good, it conforms to heaven. Although completed natures are different, their goodness is one and the same. Goodness is the necessary aspect of (it:) *dao*, nature the natural aspect. To conform to what is necessary is precisely to fulfill what is natural, and this is what is meant by the ultimate of the natural; this is where the *dao* of heaven and earth and of men and things is fully realized.³³ The *dao* of heaven cannot be discussed separately, but the *dao* of men and things will be clearly understood only when discussed separately. *The Book of Changes* also says:

The man of humanity sees it and calls it humanity. The man of wisdom sees it and calls it wisdom. The common people act according to it without knowing it. In this way the *dao* of the gentleman is fully realized.³⁴

This is to say that those who are restricted by their completed nature and cannot fully realize this *dao* are common people.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Yijing*, “Shuogua”.

³² See above, p. 258.

³³ Cf. above section 1.15, p. 213.

³⁴ *Yijing*, “Xici”, A:5; tr. Chan, *A Source Book*, p. 266 mod. The translation of the last word, *xian*, as “is fully realized”, Chan bases on Sun Xingyan’s *Zhouyi jijie*.

3.2.2.

Question: With regard to the decree, nature and *dao*, the Song Confucians were of the opinion that these are all *li*. Thus, [Zhu Xi] says:

Dao is *li* that facts and things of daily life ought to conform to.³⁵

Since [he] takes *dao* as the *li* to be followed, this is not compatible with [the notion of] cultivating *dao*.³⁶ So [he] says:

[T]o cultivate means to adjust.³⁷

But when it comes to the two sayings “a person should be cultivated by means of *dao*” and “*dao* should be cultivated by means of humanity”, the two occurrences of “cultivate” cannot be [given] different [meanings], so [he] only says: “[this means] to be able to make a person humane”, without any explanation.³⁸ When it comes to the saying “there are five universal *dao*,” he brings up the saying of Mencius about “teaching human relations”³⁹ so as to give it substance. It is evident that this [explanation] misses the original meaning of *The Doctrine of the Mean*, which also says:

Dao cannot be separated [from us] for a moment.⁴⁰

Master Zhu takes this as the basis for the doctrine that one should preserve *li*. He says:

[The gentleman] cannot be separated from *dao* for one moment.⁴¹

Wang Wencheng says:

The cultivation of virtue and the cultivation of life are one and the same thing. If [...] you [...] can be “cautious over what you do not see and apprehensive over what you do not hear”, and concentrate on [virtue], then your spirit, your *qi* and your sperm will be collected. In this case what the Daoists call physical immortality will also be present.⁴²

³⁵ *Zhongyong zhangju*, 1.

³⁶ Since Zhu Xi considers *dao* and *li* as existing above form, unchangeable and perfect, how could this be cultivated?

³⁷ *Zhongyong zhangju*, 1.

³⁸ This refers to Zhu Xi's comment on a passage in *Zhongyong zhangju*, 20.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Zhongyong*, 1.

⁴¹ *Sishu jizhu*, p. 30.

⁴² “Yu Lu Yuanjing”, in *Yangming quanshu*; tr. Julia Ching, *The Philosophical Letters of Wang Yang-ming*, p. 65 mod. Cf. section 1.12 above.

He also says:

Shakyamuni's exhortation "Be always alert" also means: "Always preserve your original state".⁴³

Master Cheng and Master Zhu sought [the meaning of *dao*] in Shakyamuni for a number of years. For example, Wang Wencheng's words refer to their early ideas. Later they changed their doctrine and turned "always preserve your original state" into "always preserve heavenly *li*". Thus, with regard to "be always alert" there was no change, whereas the two words "cautious" and "apprehensive" were considered to have been too much emphasized. Master Zhu says: "The heart must always be alert and at the same time be curbed and checked by the [constant] norms. This is the *dao* of mutual nourishment between the inner and the outer [dimensions]."⁴⁴ He also says: "The two words 'cautious' and 'apprehensive' have been emphasized too much. The important thing is to be somewhat vigilant and strive to become aware."⁴⁵ May we now hear your interpretation of the words "*dao* cannot be separated" in *The Doctrine of the Mean*?

Answer: There is nothing that issues from the self which is not *dao*, and therefore [*The Doctrine of the Mean*] says "cannot be separated for a moment, what can be separated is not *dao*."⁴⁶ "Can" is the same as "can" in [the saying] "they form the substance and cannot be left out." Whenever people are seen by the eyes [of others], they also know to be cautious with regard to their demeanour; when they are heard by the ears [of others], they also know to be apprehensive lest they make any mistake.⁴⁷ When not seen by the eyes or heard by the ears [of others], they may become nonchalant, and someone who is nonchalant cannot be said not to deviate from *dao*. *Dao* is extended from one's self, home and [habits of] drink and food to one's kin, so that there is nothing that it does not comprise. That is why [*The Doctrine of the Mean*] says:

The person should be cultivated by means of *dao*.⁴⁸

The demands of *dao* on the self are such that it often goes astray. That is why [*The Doctrine of the Mean*] says:

⁴³ Letter in reply to Lu Yuanjing; tr. Wing-tsit Chan, *Instructions for Practical Living*, p. 142 mod.

⁴⁴ *Zhu Zi yulei*, juan 12.

⁴⁵ "Da Pan Zishan" (Reply to Pan Zishan), in *Zhu Zi daquan*, juan 60, p. 27B.

⁴⁶ *Zhongyong*, 1.

⁴⁷ Cf. section 1.12 above.

⁴⁸ *Zhongyong*, 20.

Dao should be cultivated by means of humanity.⁴⁹

This is how [*The doctrine of the Mean*] proceeds from the cultivation of the self to discussing the cultivation of *dao* and so brings up humanity, righteousness, and propriety as standards of [the *dao* of men]. Later it discusses the universal *dao* and man, who bears the responsibility for carrying it out, and so brings up wisdom, humanity, and courage to show that [with these qualities] it is possible to follow the universal *dao*. [From saying that] *dao* should be cultivated by means of humanity, it proceeds to discuss righteousness and then propriety, but not wisdom. This does not mean that wisdom is discarded; it is through wisdom that clarity may be attained with regard to propriety and righteousness. [*The Doctrine of the Mean* says] “Wisdom, humanity, and courage are the universal virtues in the world”⁵⁰ without discussing righteousness and propriety. This does not mean that it discards righteousness and propriety; wisdom is the means by which righteousness and propriety may be known. Humanity, righteousness, and propriety – in these *dao* is complete. Wisdom, humanity, and courage – these are the means by which *dao* becomes complete. Thus, humanity, righteousness, and propriety are constant, but wisdom, humanity, and courage exist in [individuall] people, and so there are differences between those who are born with knowledge and know how to practise [the universal virtues] naturally and easily, those who learn through study and practise [them] for their own advantage, and those who learn through hard work and practise [them] with effort and difficulty.⁵¹ What the ancient worthies and sages called *dao* is nothing but the daily activities in human relations. It is the search in these for what is right that has produced the notions of humanity, righteousness, and propriety. Humanity, righteousness, and propriety are not adjuncts to *dao*. When there is no error in the practice of the daily activities in human relations, this is what is meant by humanity, righteousness, and propriety. The Song Confucians lumped together humanity, righteousness, and propriety and called them *li*, which they looked upon as if it were a thing, received from heaven and embodied in the heart. Thus, they considered [these virtues] to be “above form” and to be “empty and still and not showing a sign”. The daily activities in human relations they considered to be “below form” and to be “innumerable images in their multitude”.⁵² They followed Lao, Zhuang, and Shakyamuni and turned away from the daily activities in human relations to what they called *dao*, which

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ This refers to a passage in *Zhongyong*, 20.

⁵¹ This also refers to *Zhongyong*, 20.

⁵² These quotes are taken from Zhu Xi's letter to Lü Ziyue; cf. above section 1.15, note 141.

supposedly existed apart from these, and then changed [the name of] it and talked about it as *li*. With regard to heaven and earth, *yin* and *yang* could [in this view] not be called *dao*; with regard to men and things, the material endowment could not be called nature; and instances of the daily activities in human relations could not be called *dao*. There is no statement in the Six Classics or by Confucius and Mencius that supports such a view.

3.2.3.

Question: The Doctrine of the Mean says:

I know why *dao* is not pursued. The intelligent go beyond it, and the stupid do not come up to it. I know why *dao* is not understood. The worthy go beyond it, and the unworthy do not come up to it.⁵³

Master Zhu says with regard to the intelligent:

When knowledge goes beyond it, *dao* is taken not to be worth pursuing.⁵⁴

With regard to the worthy he says:

When pursued beyond [the proper limit], *dao* is taken not to be worth knowing.⁵⁵

Since it is called *dao*, there is definitely no one who considers it not worth pursuing or knowing. What is it then that the intelligent do not know and the worthy do not pursue? *The Doctrine of the Mean* explains that *dao* is not pursued in terms of intelligence and stupidity, not in terms of worthiness and unworthiness; it explains that *dao* is not understood in terms of worthiness and unworthiness, not in terms of intelligence and stupidity. Why is this so?

Answer: The intelligent are conceited and do not believe that they may be deluded, but they often err in practice. The hearts of the stupid are deluded and beclouded, so they naturally keep making mistakes. The worthy believe that they base themselves on correctness and not on perverseness, but they are often stubborn and seldom make adjustments [to changing circumstances]. The hearts of the unworthy are degenerate: although they know what is proper in a certain situation, they are like the ignorant and pursue what is wrong and evil. But how could the intelligent and the stupid, the worthy and the unworthy transcend the daily activities in human relations? Therefore, [*The Doctrine of the Mean*] says:

There is no one who does not eat and drink, but there are few who can really know flavour.⁵⁶

“Eat and drink” is a metaphor for the daily activities in human relations;

⁵³ *Zhongyong*, 4; tr. Chan, *A Source Book*, p. 99.

⁵⁴ *Zhongyong zhangju*, 4.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ *Zhongyong*, 4; tr. Chan, *A Source Book*, p. 99.

“know flavour” is a metaphor for not erring in practice. To conceive of *dao* apart from the daily activities in human relations is to seek to know flavour outside drinking and eating. With regard to the daily activities in human relations, if a person seeks the unchangeable norms for everything he does, [his] humanity will be perfect and [his] righteousness complete, and he will conform to heaven. The daily activities in human relations are [concrete] things, and humanity, righteousness, and propriety are their norms. With regard to the daily activities in human relations specifically, anything that a person does is called *dao*. So when [*The Doctrine of the Mean*] says that the person should be cultivated by means of *dao*, and that *dao* should be cultivated by means of humanity, a distinction is made between things and norms. But when moral integrity is taken as the univesal *dao* and the means as *dao*, then things and norms are discussed as one unit.

3.2.4.

Question: Yan Yuan sighed and said:

The more I look up to it the higher it appears. The more I bore into it the harder it becomes. I see it before me. Suddenly it is behind me.⁵⁷

Gongsun Chou said:

Dao is indeed lofty and beautiful, but to attempt it is like trying to climb up to heaven which seems beyond one's reach. Why not substitute for it something which men have some hopes of attaining so as to encourage them constantly to make the effort?⁵⁸

Now you speak about the daily activities in human relations and say that everything that a person does is *dao*. This is good enough if only you can grasp the unchangeable norms. But why is it that [*dao*] can be so vague and indeterminate [as Yan Yuan and Gongsun Chou describe it]?

Answer: Mencius says:

Dao is like a wide road, so how could it be difficult to know?⁵⁹

This is to say that everyone pursues *dao*. For example, to be a ruler and attend to the affairs of a ruler, to be a minister and attend to the affairs of a minister, to be a father or a son and attend to the affairs of a father or a son – these are all examples of what is called *dao*. If the ruler does not observe humanity, the *dao* of rulers will go astray; if a minister does not observe reverence, the *dao* of ministers will go astray; if a father does not observe kindness, the *dao* of fathers will go astray; and if a son does not observe filial piety, the *dao* of sons will go astray. Thus, to complete the *dao* of rulers, ministers, fathers, and sons is impossible without wisdom, humanity, and courage. In terms of [the concrete] substance [of human behaviour] we may speak of “universal *dao*” and “universal virtue”, while in terms of refinement we may speak of *dao* when someone who is in full possession of wisdom, humanity and courage completes the *dao* of rulers, ministers, fathers, and sons, and when his behaviour does not go beyond [the proper measure].⁶⁰ Therefore, *The Doctrine of the Mean* says:

⁵⁷ *Lunyu*, 9:11; tr. Lau, *The Analects*, p. 97.

⁵⁸ *Meng Zi*, 7A:41; tr. Lau, *Mencius*, p. 191 mod.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 6B:2.

⁶⁰ The distinction between “substance” (*zhi*) and “refinement” (*jing*) refers just like the distinction between the “natural” (*ziran*) and the “necessary” (*biran*) to the distinction between what just is and what ought to be respectively.

Great is the *dao* of the sage! Overflowing, it produces and nourishes all things and rises up to the height of heaven. How exceedingly great! [It embraces] the three hundred rules of ceremonies and the three thousand rules of conduct. It waits for the proper man before it can be put into practice.⁶¹

This is an exhaustive description of the greatness of *dao*, so how could it transcend the daily activities in human relations? The highest form of *dao* is an attribute of people with the highest form of virtue, so how could people with little learning easily understand it? Now someone who studies sages and observes the words and deeds of sages may be compared to someone who studies chess with Chess Expert Qiu: no one can grasp Chess Expert Qiu's technique and quickly reach his level.⁶² Yan Zi also said:

The Master is good at leading one on step by step. He broadens (*bo*) me with culture and brings me back to essentials (*yue*) by means of propriety.⁶³

The Doctrine of the Mean carefully lists the steps [of study] – extensive study, accurate inquiry, careful deliberation, lucid analysis, and earnest practice – and says finally:

If you really follow this *dao*, though stupid, you will become intelligent, and though weak, you will become strong.⁶⁴

To follow *dao*, and reach the *dao* of the sages, means in fact to follow this *dao* and from day to day develop your wisdom, humanity, and courage and let these [virtues] find full realization in a sage. To develop them from day to day is easy but also has its difficulties. It may be compared to learning a technique or a skill: to begin with you make progress from day to day and from month to month, but later others do not see the progress. And still later even you feel that it is impossible to advance any further. Even if someone is recognized as an artisan of national stature, he knows that he has not yet reached the ultimate limit [of his craftsmanship]. Yan Zi said:

I cannot give up even if I wanted to, but, having exhausted my capacity, it [*dao*] seems to rise sheer above me and I have no way of going after it, however much I may want to.⁶⁵

This is how far Yan Zi reached.

⁶¹ *Zhongyong*, 29; tr. Chan, *A Source Book*, p. 110.

⁶² Cf. *Meng Zi*, 6:9

⁶³ *Lunyu*, 9:11; tr. Lau, *The Analects*, p. 97 mod.

⁶⁴ *Zhongyong*, 20.

⁶⁵ *Lunyu*, 9:11; tr. Lau, *The Analects*, p. 97, mod.

3.3. Humanity, Righteousness, Propriety, and Wisdom. Two sections.

3.3.1.

Humanity is the character of production and reproduction.

The people are simple, daily they enjoy their drink and food.⁶⁶

This refers exclusively to how the *dao* of men produces and reproduces. When a person fulfills his life, and by extension helps all others in the world to fulfill their lives, that is humanity. The word humanity encompasses righteousness, and so if the love between close relatives, or the elders' care [for the young], do not measure up to the correct and great principles, righteousness is not fully realized, nor does humanity reach its apogee. The word humanity also encompasses propriety, and so if there are no distinctions in personal relations between those who are close and those who are distant, and between those who are superior and those who are inferior, then propriety will be lost and also humanity will not prevail. Moreover, the word righteousness encompasses propriety, and the word propriety encompasses righteousness. When the ancient kings taught propriety, this was, without exception, in accord with the correct and great principles. The gentleman's understanding of righteousness consists in [the ability to] make judgments without the slightest error concerning which relatives are close and which are distant and concerning who is superior and who is inferior. But there is also no doubt that righteousness and propriety encompass humanity. Humanity, righteousness, and propriety encompass wisdom, and wisdom is to know these. *The Book of Changes* says:

[The sages] established the *dao* of men and called it humanity and righteousness.⁶⁷

The Doctrine of the Mean says:

Humanity is [the distinguishing characteristic of] man, and the greatest application of it is in being affectionate towards relatives. Righteousness is the principle of setting things right and proper, and the greatest application of it is in knowing the worthy. The relative degree of

⁶⁶ *Shijing* 260; tr. Karlgren, *The Book of Odes*, pp. 109–110.

⁶⁷ *Yijing*, “Shuogua”.

affection we ought to feel for our relatives and the relative grades in the knowing of the worthy give rise to the rules of propriety.⁶⁸

With the addition of propriety, humanity will reach its apogee, and righteousness will be fully realized. The flourishing of virtue depends entirely on wisdom and humanity. But *The Doctrine of the Mean* says:

Wisdom, humanity, and courage – these three are the universal virtues in the world.⁶⁹

Courage is added because it makes virtue complete. The ultimate standards of the daily activities in human relations, when examined in their refined and minute details, are humanity, righteousness, and propriety. These three are combined to judge affairs in the world, like scales are used to measure weights, and to see whether there is any deficiency with regard to humanity or any transgression of the rules of propriety and righteousness. In this way, the *dao* [of men] is fulfilled. The virtuous character that exists in a person is called wisdom, humanity, and courage. These three constitute the beauty of the physical capacity. Thanks to this physical capacity and by developing it further, everyone can attain sagehood. If we trace the *dao* of heaven from the *dao* of men and the true character of heaven from the virtuous character of man, we shall see that the universal operation of the transformation of *qi* consists in production and reproduction without pause. This is humanity. Because in the process of production and reproduction there is a natural order, and as we see in it a regular procedure, we can understand propriety. As we can see that the order can never be confused, we can understand righteousness. In heaven [=nature] the virtue of humanity is the production and reproduction of *qi*, and in man it is the heart that produces and reproduces. In nature the virtue of wisdom is the order in which the transformation of *qi* operates, and in man it is the heart's realization that the order is without any confusion. It is only because there is order that there is production and reproduction. Without order, the *dao* of production and reproduction would come to an end. The word couples “humanity and righteousness” and “wisdom and humanity” always imply production and reproduction as well as order.

⁶⁸ Zhongyong, 20; tr. Chan, *A Source Book*, p. 104 mod.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

3.3.2.

Question: The Analects say:

Hold loyalty and faithfulness to be fundamental.⁷⁰

It also says:

As regards propriety it is better to err on the side of frugality than on the side of extravagance; in mourning it is better to err on the side of grief than on the side of formality.⁷¹

When Zi Xia heard that “when painting the white is put on afterwards”,⁷² he added:

Does the practice of propriety likewise come afterwards?⁷³

Master Zhu said:

Loyalty and faithfulness [...] form the substance of propriety.⁷⁴

As evidence he quoted *The Book of Rites*:

[Only] those who are loyal and faithful are able to learn propriety.⁷⁵

Lao Zi said explicitly:

Propriety is a superficial expression of loyalty and faithfulness, and the beginning of disorder.⁷⁶

His point is similar [to Zhu Xi's]. But *The Analects* say:

In a hamlet of ten families there are bound to be some people as loyal and faithful as myself, but not who love study as much as I do.⁷⁷

And they also say:

⁷⁰ *Lunyu*, 1:8; tr. Chan, *A Source Book*, p. 20.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 3:4; tr. Lau, *The Analects*, p. 67 mod.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 3:8.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ *Lunyu jizhu*, 3:8.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.* Quote from *Liji*, “*Liqi*”.

⁷⁶ *Lao Zi*, 38; tr. Chan, *A Source Book*, p. 158.

⁷⁷ *Lunyu*, 3:8.

To control oneself and return to propriety is humanity.⁷⁸

The Doctrine of the Mean explains propriety in terms of “knowing heaven”. Mencius says:

When all movements and expressions are exactly proper according to the rules of propriety, that shows the highest degree of eminent virtue.⁷⁹

Why is it that he emphasizes study and propriety like this, while not bothering to discuss loyalty and faithfulness?

Answer: The rules of propriety constitute the order of heaven and earth, and you cannot give an exhaustive explanation of this order in its minute details if you do not understand heaven. Ceremonials and regulations have also been determined in accordance with the order of heaven and earth as the procedures in the world for all times. The rules of propriety have been established so as to regulate feelings in the world: restrict them when they have gone too far, spur them when they have not attained [the proper degree] and let people know what is in accordance with heaven and earth. That the outward appearance is adorned when someone’s feelings are shallow does not mean that the feelings are shallow because of the adornment of the appearance; it means that this person’s feelings have gradually grown shallow and that he takes only the adornment of the appearance as propriety. It does not mean dislike of adornment of the appearance; it means dislike of feelings being shallow. The object of propriety is to control vulgarity and transform it into culture; the object of mourning is to control a person’s grief and keep him away from the path of immediate [uncontrolled] emotional action. Those whose feelings are superficial indulge in luxury and ease when they should restrain their grief. Although inadequate [with regard to propriety], they are still close to the original intention behind setting up the rules of propriety. That is why [Confucius] answered in this way when Lin Fang asked about the root of propriety:

[Only] those who are loyal and faithful are able to learn propriety.⁸⁰

This is to say that those whose substance is beautiful will, if they advance and accord with the rules of propriety, be free from the malady of adorning their outward appearance while their feelings are shallow. That they are loyal and faithful means that their substance is beautiful, just like it says [in *The Book of Changes*]:

⁷⁸ *Lunyu*, 12:1.

⁷⁹ *Meng Zi*, 7B:33; tr. Chan, *A Source Book*, p. 83.

⁸⁰ See above note 75.

If you are not the right person, *dao* cannot be pursued in emptiness.⁸¹

When we come to Lao Zi, who wanted to do away with propriety because social habits were corrupt, his intention was to revert to the honest and simple [ways of the past]. But in fact not everyone in the world could be brought back to honesty and simplicity. If those who have been honest and simple since birth were to follow the path of immediate [uncontrolled] emotional action, and if those who have degenerated to evil and shallowness were to act without restraint, this would be to turn men into animals and to cause chaos in the whole world. A gentleman complies with the rules of propriety, and it goes without saying that he is loyal and faithful. When someone does not know propriety, whatever he engages in will not be in accord with the [natural] order, and so he cannot be called a gentleman. When Lin Fang asked about the root of propriety and Zi Xia asked if propriety comes afterwards, they both attached great importance to propriety and did not think little of it.

The Book of Odes says:

The white is used to achieve patterns of colour.⁸²

“The white” is a metaphor which means that this person is skilled in refining her looks. The preceding lines – “Her entrancing smile dimpling,/Her beautiful eyes glancing” – make her beauty stand out even clearer. This is what is meant by “patterns of colour”. The metaphorical meaning is profound and far-reaching, and so Zi Xia raised a question [with regard to the meaning of these lines]. The phrase “when painting the white is put on afterwards” Zheng Kangcheng explains thus:

When a painting is made, the different colours are first put on, and after that the white is added between the other colours to achieve the [intended] pattern.⁸³

He Pingshu said in his *Jingfudian fu*: “When white is added between the colours what is distant and what is close will be regulated.” Thus he defined the way of painting in ancient times.⁸⁴ His [Zheng Kangcheng’s] annotation of the phrase “In painting the white should be put on afterwards” in the “Artificers’ Record” reads:

⁸¹ *Yijing*, “Xici”, B:8.

⁸² Quoted from *Lunyu*, 3:8. This poem is no. 58, but this line is not present in the editions of *Shijing* now extant. The interpretation of this line has been a subject of controversy. Dai Zhen’s interpretation, which I try to capture in my translation, seems linguistically sound.

⁸³ Zheng Xuan’s comment on *Lunyu*, 3:8, see *SSJZS*, p. 2466.

⁸⁴ He Pingshu is better known as He Yan (?–249 A.D.). This *fu* is included in the *Wenxuan*, *juan* 11.

Su means white, which is put on afterwards because it is so easily stained.⁸⁵

This is to say that only when the white is put on afterwards can the five colours stand out in all their lustre. When your appearance is beautiful [from the beginning] and you are also skilled in refining your looks – this is true beauty. [Interpreted in this way] the metaphor “the white is used to achieve patterns of colour” becomes crystal clear. After encountering this saying [“in painting the white is put on afterwards”], Zi Xia no longer raised any question with regard to [the saying in] *The Book of Odes*; he also understood that beautiful substance should be refined by means of propriety and that [doing so] is what the gentleman should be esteemed for. If you say that Zi Xia considered propriety as secondary and loyalty and faithfulness as primary, he would, like Lao Zi, only refer to the behaviour of those who adorn their appearance while their feelings are shallow; then he would be of an entirely different meaning than Lin Fang who considered [those who] adorned their appearance while their feelings were shallow as [examples of] the corruption of social habits. – How could Confucius have permitted this?

Loyalty and faithfulness emanate from the substance being beautiful. Discussing behaviour, the sages and worthies did indeed consider loyalty and faithfulness to be of major importance. But consider someone’s behaviour issuing from his substance: If his studies are insufficient, his knowledge will be deficient, which will cause errors in his behaviour; then, even though his heart is not devoid of loyalty and faithfulness, he will still do harm to *dao* in many [of his action].⁸⁶ People who unknowingly err in their behaviour and who only care that their hearts are pure may be loyal and faithful but dislike study, which is often the reason why [they err]. This shows the importance of study and of propriety.

⁸⁵ “The Artificers’ Record” – “Kaogong ji” – is a chapter in the *Zhouli*. For Zheng Kangcheng’s annotation, see *SSJZS*, p. 919.

⁸⁶ The Chinese word that I render as “do harm to” is *hai*. Discussing the Mohists, A.C. Graham remarks that “they use this word [*hai*] where one would like to use the word ‘inconsistent’”. (*Later Mohist Logic*, p. 188.) The meaning of Dai Zhen’s words here seems to be that the person he describes will act in a way which is inconsistent with *dao*.

3.4. Sincerity. Two sections.

3.4.1.

“To be sincere” means to be “real”. According to *The Doctrine of the Mean*, it is wisdom, humanity, and courage that become real, and it is humanity, righteousness, and propriety that make them real.⁸⁷ If we speak of wisdom, humanity, and courage in terms of blood and *qi* and the mental faculty, then wisdom, humanity, and courage do not exist apart from blood and *qi* and the mental faculty, and they are not imparted to [man]. And if humanity, propriety and righteousness are discussed in terms of the daily activities in human relations, there is no humanity, no righteousness and no propriety outside the daily activities in human relations. Blood and *qi* and the mental faculty are allotments of *yin* and *yang* and the five phases and they complete [a person’s] nature. Therefore [*The Doctrine of the Mean*] says:

The decree of heaven is what is meant by nature.⁸⁸

The daily activities in human relations are all facts pertaining to blood and *qi* and the mental faculty, and therefore [*The Doctrine of the Mean*] says:

To follow nature is what is meant by *dao*.⁸⁹

When someone who is in full possession of wisdom, humanity, and courage practises these in his daily activities in human relations, everyone can see his humanity, propriety, and righteousness, and he lacks no goodness. This is “enlightenment resulting from sincerity”.⁹⁰ When [someone] studies in order to understand the daily activities in human relations, seeking to comply fully

⁸⁷ The Chinese original reads “suo shi zhe zhi ren yong ye. Shi zhi zhe ren ye, yi ye, li ye.” My translation is tentative. In the *Zhongyong*, 20, wisdom, humanity and courage are defined as the “three universal virtues” (*san da de*). He who knows these will be able to cultivate his personal life and so govern other men. One’s personal life should be cultivated by means of *dao*, and *dao* should be cultivated by means of humanity. Righteousness and propriety constitute central norms in dealing with (and governing) other people. When humanity, righteousness, and propriety are successfully applied in the cultivation of one’s personal life and in governing other people, the implications of the three universal virtues are thus realized. For a penetrating discussion of these concepts in the *Zhongyong*, see Tu Weiming, *Centrality and Commonality. An Essay on Chung-yung*, pp. 71 ff.

⁸⁸ *Zhongyong*, 1.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 21.

with humanity, propriety, and righteousness, his wisdom, humanity, and courage will gradually reach the sage's height of virtue. This is "sincerity resulting from enlightenment".⁹¹ In terms of [the concrete] substance [of human behaviour] we may speak about the daily activities in human relations, while in terms of refinement we may speak about humanity, righteousness, and propriety. When *The Doctrine of the Mean* speaks about "understanding goodness",⁹² it means to understand this [humanity, righteousness, and propriety]; when it speaks about "being sincere with oneself", this [to practise humanity, righteousness, and propriety] is what sincerity means. In terms of substance we may speak about blood and *qi* and the mental faculty, while in terms of refinement we may speak about wisdom, humanity, and courage. When *The Doctrine of the Mean* speaks about "exerting oneself [cultivating] small matters",⁹³ this means to exert oneself [cultivating] these [wisdom, humanity, and courage]; and when it speaks about "possessing sincerity",⁹⁴ it means to possess these [wisdom, humanity, and courage]. When it comes to pursuing *dao* all out, without deviation, nothing is more important than humanity, but it also involves righteousness and propriety. When it comes to the ability to pursue *dao* all out, without deviation, nothing is more important than wisdom, but [this ability] also involves righteousness and propriety. Therefore, although there are innumerable aspects of it, goodness will be complete if you adhere to humanity, righteousness, and propriety. Although there are innumerable beautiful [aspects] of virtuous nature, virtue will be complete if you adhere to wisdom, humanity, and courage. To make goodness and virtue fully real is what is meant by sincerity.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² *Zhongyong*, 20.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 23.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

3.4.2.

Question: *The Doctrine of the Mean* says:

Some are born with the knowledge. Some learn it through study. Some learn it through hard work. [...] Some practise it naturally and easily. Some practise it for their advantage. Some practise it with effort and difficulty.⁹⁵

Master Zhu says:

What is known and what is practised is the universal *dao*.⁹⁶

Now you refer to the relations between ruler and minister, father and son etc. and call only these universal *dao*. Only he who practices it with wisdom, humanity, and courage can as a ruler pursue the *dao* of rulers all out, without deviation, or as a minister pursue the *dao* of ministers all out, without deviation. So when *The Doctrine of the Mean* speaks about knowing and practising it, this should be understood in terms of acquiring the ability to pursue *dao* all out, without deviation, by means of wisdom, humanity, and courage. *The Doctrine of the Mean* says, “the ways by which they are practised are three”,⁹⁷ but also “the way by which they are practised is one”.⁹⁸ Master Cheng and Master Zhu take ‘sincerity’ as “the one” referred to. Further down [*The Doctrine of the Mean*] says:

There are nine standards by which to administer the empire, its states, and the families, but the way by which they are practised is one.⁹⁹

Master Zhu also says:

If not sincere, [...] everything will be empty words.¹⁰⁰

In *The Doctrine of the Mean* “sincerity” is discussed above and below this [passage]. Why is it that it does not here say, “the way by which they are practised is sincerity”?

Answer: To call somebody wise is to say that he is not obscured. To call somebody humane is to say that he is not selfish. To call someone courageous

⁹⁵ *Zhongyong*, 20.

⁹⁶ *Zhongyong zhangju*, 20.

⁹⁷ *Zhongyong*, 20.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ *Zhongyong zhangju*, 20.

is to say that he strives to strengthen himself. If not unobscured, unselfish, and striving to strengthen himself, he cannot be said to be wise, humane, and courageous. Since practised by means of wisdom, humanity, and courage, [humanity, righteousness, and propriety] are the same as sincerity. If wisdom, humanity, and courage were not to attain sincerity, then this would not be wisdom, humanity, and courage. How could one then speak about wisdom, humanity, or courage? Further down [*The Doctrine of the Mean*] says:

To fast, to purify, and to be correct in dress, and not to make any movement contrary to the rules of propriety – this is the way to cultivate the personal life. To avoid slanderers, keep away seductive beauties, regard wealth lightly and exalt virtue – this is the way to encourage the worthy.¹⁰¹

If someone is like this, it means that he is sincere. If “to fast, to purify, and to be correct in dress, and not make any movement contrary to the rules of propriety” were empty words, this would mean that no one has ever [been able to] fast, to purify, to be correct in dress, and not make any movement contrary to the rules of propriety. If “to avoid slanderers, keep away seductive beauties, regard wealth lightly and exalt virtue” were empty words, then no one would ever have [been able to] “avoid slanderers”, “keep away seductive beauties”, to “regard wealth lightly and exalt virtue”. How could one then talk about these things? All [quotations] which say that “the way by which they are practised is one” mean that man’s natural capacities are different whereas there are no differences in that the universal *dao* must be pursued by means of wisdom, humanity, and courage; in that the self must be cultivated by means of fasting, purifying, being correct in dress, not making any movement contrary to the rules of propriety; and in that the worthy must be encouraged by means of avoiding slanderers, keeping away seductive beauties, regarding wealth lightly and exalting virtue. Mencius said in answer to Gongsun Chou:

A great craftsman does not put aside the plumb-line for the benefit of the clumsy carpenter. Yi did not compromise on his standards of drawing the bow for the sake of the clumsy archer.¹⁰²

This is to say that two different methods should not be employed depending on [the person’s] skill or clumsiness [in using wisdom, humanity, and courage to practise humanity, righteousness and propriety]. Mencius told the crown prince of Teng:

There is one *dao* and one only.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ *Zhongyong*, 20.

¹⁰² *Meng Zi*, 7A:41, tr. Lau, *Mencius*, p. 191.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 3A:1.

This is to say that there are not two *dao* just because people's sagely wisdom does not measure up to the standard of Yao, Shun, or King Wen. Thus, natural capacities are different. Some are born with knowledge and practise it naturally and easily. Others learn it through study and practise it for their advantage. Others again learn it through hard work and practise it with effort and difficulty. Those who are born with knowledge and practise it naturally and easily possess wisdom, humanity, and courage to a sufficient degree. Those who learn it through study and practise it to their advantage are somewhat lacking in wisdom, humanity, and courage. Those who learn it through hard work and practise it with effort and difficulty do not possess enough of wisdom, humanity, and courage. *The Doctrine of the Mean* also says:

When the knowledge is gained, it comes to the same thing. [...] When the achievement is made, it comes to the same thing.¹⁰⁴

So wisdom, humanity, and courage may be increased until they reach their ultimate point. If these three are discarded, the demands that *dao* places on the person cannot be realized.

¹⁰⁴ *Zhongyong*, 20.

3.5. Flexible evaluation according to circumstances. Four sections.

3.5.1.

Flexible evaluation according to circumstances (*quan*)¹⁰⁵ is the means by which to discriminate between the light and the heavy. Anything that has remained light or heavy without change since times immemorial is constant. When something is constant, it is clear for all to see that its weight has remained unchanged since times immemorial. But in certain cases what is heavy becomes light and what is light becomes heavy, and this is change. If you do not exert your wisdom to the utmost so that you are able to analyze and examine things correctly, it [your wisdom] will not be sufficient to understand change. *The Analects* say:

A man good enough as a partner in one's studies may not be good enough as a partner in the pursuit of *dao*. A man good enough as a partner in the pursuit of *dao* may not be good enough as a partner in a common stand. A man good enough as a partner in a common stand may not be good enough in the exercise of flexible evaluation according to circumstances.¹⁰⁶

If you ask why people study a certain thing, there are some whose motives are far away from *dao*, namely those who seek reward and fame. That is why [*The Analects* say] “may not be good enough as a partner in the pursuit of *dao*”. *Dao* demands from the self not to err, but if we look at how people abide by *dao*, there are few who are not lured away from it. That is why [*The Analects* say] “may not be good enough as a partner in a common stand”. [There are people who] although they abide by *dao* know only constancy and not change, because their understanding lacks in depth and precision and they have not exerted themselves to increase the enlightenment of their mental capacity and bring it up to the level of sagely wisdom. This is why [*The Analects* say] “may not be good enough in the exercise of flexible evaluation according to circumstances”.

¹⁰⁵ The word *quan* was early used to refer to a flexible application of a norm (*‘jing*). Meng Zi points out that although it is a rule of propriety that men and women should not touch each other when they give or receive things, someone who does not use his hands to rescue his drowning sister is a brute. To use one's hands to rescue one's drowning sister is an example of the exercise of *quan*. (Meng Zi, 4 A:17.) *Shuowen jiezi* defines *quan* as “going against what is normal” (*fan chang*).

¹⁰⁶ *Lunyu*, 9:30, tr. Lau, *The Analects*, p. 100 mod.

Denouncing Yang [Zhu] and Mo [Zi], Mencius says:

If the *dao* of Yang and Mo does not subside, and if the *dao* of Confucius is not brought to light, perverse doctrines will delude the people and obstruct humanity and righteousness. If humanity and righteousness are obstructed, this will lead beasts on to eat men, and men to eat one another.¹⁰⁷

When people now read this book, who knows what will lead beasts on to eat men and men to eat one another? Mencius also says:

Yang Zi chooses egoism. Even if he could benefit the whole world by pulling out one single hair he would not do it. Mo Zi advocates universal love. If by shaving his head and showing his heels he could benefit the world, he would do it. Zi Mo holds on to the mean, half way between the two extremes. Holding on to the mean is closer to being right. But holding on to the mean without [allowing for] flexible evaluation according to circumstances is like holding on to one extreme. The reason why I dislike those who hold on to one extreme is that they destroy *dao*. They single out one thing to the neglect of a hundred others.¹⁰⁸

When people now read his book, who knows why [he warns against] not allowing for special circumstances and the immense harm caused by taking up one point and neglecting a hundred others? Mencius says that nature is good, and in reply to Gao Zi's statement about "turning human nature into humanity and righteousness", he says:

[Your words would] lead all people in the world to do serious harm to humanity and righteousness."¹⁰⁹

When people now read his book, who knows that nature must be enlightened and the damage [caused by idea that] man must be violated in order to become humane and righteous?

According to the doctrine of having no desires propounded by Lao Dan and Zhuang Zhou and the notion of "emptiness" which Shakyamuni later formulated, man can transcend [his physical existence] and not have his heart entangled by the need to nourish his body or by the life and death of his body, while only selfishly caring about "long life and everlasting existence"¹¹⁰ and about "not being born and not perishing".¹¹¹ As far as men and animals are concerned, they should be regarded as alike and treated with the same affection. In this way they combine the doctrines of Yang and Mo to advance

¹⁰⁷ *Meng Zi*, 3B:9.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 7A:26, tr. D.C. Lau, Mencius pp. 187–8 mod.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 6A:1.

¹¹⁰ *Lao Zi*, 5.

¹¹¹ Cf. above section 1.15, note 120.

their own doctrine. Because of their selfishness they would not even pull out one single hair in order to benefit the world; but considering the body as secondary and advocating universal love, they would even shave their heads and show their heels [sacrifice themselves] in order to benefit the world.

Song Confucians such as Master Cheng and Master Zhu changed the selfishness cherished by Lao, Zhuang, and Shakyamuni and [instead] value *li*; they changed what the latter considered as secondary and [instead] censure “physical [nature]”. That which [the Song Confucians] call *li* is as if it were a thing residing in the heart. They juxtapose *li* and desire saying: “What does not emanate from *li* emanates from desire, and what does not emanate from desire emanates from *li*”. Even if they see people who suffer from starvation and cold, or people who lament their poor conjugal relations, or even people who shun death and want to live – they consider this nothing but human desires. Arbitrarily they refer to the impulse to eradicate feelings and desires as [in accord with] original heavenly *li*, stored in the heart. When it comes to responding to and dealing with different matters, they may be lucky and fortuitously do the right thing, but this does not mean that they attain their good result through meticulous investigation of matters of fact. Or they may be unlucky and, although not understanding the facts of the matters, hold on to their [subjective] opinions, confident that these represent heavenly *li* and not human desires. On a small scale this brings disaster to the individual person; on a large scale it brings disaster to the world, the state, and the family. They only care that they do not proceed from desires, and so cannot wake up [from their delusions]. Of all those who consider *li* as “residing in the heart” and who [argue] that what does not emanate from desires emanates from *li*, there is no one who has not taken opinions as *li* and so brought disaster to the world.

Man faces two perils, selfishness and obscurity. Selfishness emanates from feelings and desires, obscurity from the mental faculty. To be free from selfishness is humanity, to be free from obscurity is wisdom. Humanity is not to eradicate feelings and desires, and wisdom is not to get rid of the mental faculty. For this reason the *dao* of the sages and worthies is to be free from selfishness, not from desires. Lao, Zhuang, and Shakyamuni had no desires, but were not free from selfishness. As far as the latter are concerned, it was the absence of desires that caused their selfishness, whereas the former by virtue of being free from selfishness could understand feelings and satisfy desires in the world. All [these] deviant doctrines place the main emphasis on having no desires and not on being unobscured. They emphasize action, not prior knowledge. When someone shows that his earnest practice consists in having no desires, they all respect and trust him. Since the learning of worthies and sages proceeded from extensive study through accurate inquiry, careful

deliberation and lucid analysis to earnest practice,¹¹² practice [in their case] meant to practise the daily activities in human relations without obscuration. This is not like the latter [Lao, Zhuang, and Shakyamuni], who discarded the daily activities in human relations and held that to have no desires is to be capable of earnest practice. Those daily activities in human relations, through which the sages understood feelings and satisfied desires in the world, and which are subject to flexible evaluation according to circumstances so that there is no error with regard to the *li* of discrimination – these are called *li*.

The Song Confucians talk about “being obscured by human desires”, and as long as they do not proceed from desires they are confident that they are not obscured. In ancient and modern times there has been no shortage of serious and upright people who, abhorring evil as their foe, consider as right what is right and as wrong what is wrong, who hold on to obvious and universal [judgments] of what is heavy and what is light, but who in fact do not realize that at times what they weigh (*quan*)¹¹³ and find heavy may in certain cases become light, and what they find light may in certain cases become heavy. When they err in their judgment of right and wrong, and light and heavy, the world suffers irreparable damage. How could this possibly be that they are obscured by desires? That which they believe to be *li* is not *li*. Thus, where Mencius spoke about “holding on to the mean without [allowing for] flexible evaluation according to circumstances”, later Confucians also speak about “holding on to *li* without flexible evaluation according to circumstances”.

¹¹² Cf. section 3.2.4 above.

¹¹³ This is the same word *quan*, which in its other occurrences in this section is translated as “flexible evaluation according to circumstances”.

3.5.2.¹¹⁴

Question: The Song Confucians also know to seek *li* in [concrete] facts and things, but having been followers of Shakyamuni, they use *li* to refer to what he calls spiritual intelligence. Therefore they regard *li* as if it were a thing and they not only speak about “the *li* of facts and things”¹¹⁵ but also say that “*li* is scattered among facts and things”.¹¹⁶ The *li* of facts and things can be grasped only through the most minute analysis of facts and things. [Believing that] *li* is scattered among facts and things, they seek it through deep and quiet concentration of the heart. They say:

[*Li* has] one root but ten thousand manifestations.¹¹⁷

And they say:

Unroll it and it reaches in all directions. Roll it up and it withdraws and lies hidden in minuteness.¹¹⁸

Actually they follow Shakyamuni who says:

Universally manifested, it includes the whole realm of law (*dharma-dhatu*). Collected and grasped, it is a single speck of dust.¹¹⁹

Since they seek *li* through deep and quiet concentration of the heart, thinking that they have grasped the oneness of its substance, they are confident that *li* means to have no desires. Even their partial opinions they say emanate from *li* and not from desires. It is just because they regard *li* as if it were a thing that they cannot help considering it as one. But since any fact has a *li*, which differs from fact to fact, they also say:

The heart [...] embodies all *li* and responds to all facts.¹²⁰

The heart embodies it and issues it forth. What could this be other than opinion? Besides, if all *li* are contained in the heart, then when something

¹¹⁴ Large parts of this section have been translated by Chan, *A Source Book*, pp. 720–722, and I have drawn on his translation for my own.

¹¹⁵ *Zhu Zi yulei*, *juan* 18.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ Zhu Xi's comment on Zhang Zai's *Zhengmeng*.

¹¹⁸ Anzhenghui says that this quote can be found in *Er Cheng julu*, *juan* 8. I have not had access to this edition of sayings, which contains 15 *juan* from the *Yishu* and two *juan* from the *Waishu*.

¹¹⁹ *Jingde Chuandeng lu*, *juan* 3.

¹²⁰ *Meng Zi jizhu*, 7A:1. Zhu Xi expresses the same view in his comment on *Daxue*, 1.

occurs, the heart issues a *li* in response. And so on to hundreds and thousands and millions without end. Since the heart contains all *li*, it should be possible to point out their number. There must be an explanation whether there is one [*li*] or whether there are innumerable *li*. Therefore they say:

Li is one but its manifestations are many.¹²¹

Now *The Analects* say twice:

There is one single thread binding it [Confucius' doctrines or *dao*] together.¹²²

Commenting on [the passage where Confucius] talks to Zeng Zi about this, Master Zhu says:

The heart of the sage is one undifferentiated *li*, but in its various responses and applications, it functions differently in each case. With respect to its functioning, Zeng Zi understood *li* clearly as things occurred and had earnestly put it into practice, but he did not understand the oneness of its substance.¹²³

This explanation must be wrong. Can you tell us what the two chapters originally mean?

Answer. "There is one single thread binding it together" is not to say that you can use one single thing to bind it together. As far as *dao* is concerned, there is a difference between studying what is below and penetrating what is above;¹²⁴ as far as acquiring knowledge is concerned, there is a difference between the tendency to [seek] knowledge of traces of *dao* and of its essence respectively. [Confucius' words] "there is one single thread binding my *dao* together" means that the *dao* he penetrates above is the same *dao* that he studies below. [He says] "I have a single thread binding it all together" – adhering to his earlier statement he does not say "I study [one thing in order to bind it all together]", and this means that if you grasp the essence of *dao*, your heart's understanding [of *dao*] does not depend on knowing its multifarious traces. *The Doctrine of the Mean* says:

Conscientiousness (*zhong*) and altruism (*shu*) are far from *dao*.¹²⁵

¹²¹ *Zhu Zi yulei*, juan 98.

¹²² *Lunyu*, 4:15 and 15:3.

¹²³ *Lunyu juzhu*, 4:15.

¹²⁴ Cf. *Lunyu*, 14:37.

¹²⁵ *Zhongyong*, 13; tr. Chan, *A Source Book*, p. 101 mod.

Mencius says:

Practise altruism vigorously, there is no shorter way to humanity.¹²⁶

Thus, if someone can be conscientious in whatever issues from his self and altruistic in treating others, then acting accordingly he will make few mistakes. Anyone who has not attained the status of a sage, who cannot be referred to in terms of humanity and who is not flawless with regard to propriety and righteousness, can still be called conscientious and altruistic in terms of his [physical] capacity and mental enlightenment. A sage is humane as well as wise. In dealing with matters he manifests neither lack of humanity nor lack of propriety and righteousness. Conscientiousness and altruism are not sufficient to apply the notion [of sagehood]. But there is nothing else: When conscientiousness and altruism reach [sagehood], they attain their ultimate limit. Thus, Zeng Zi says:

The *dao* of our Master is none other than conscientiousness and altruism.¹²⁷

The expression “none other than” is insufficient, but there is no better alternative. Only by studying what is below and thereby penetrating what is above can one say this.

The Analects say:

Hear much and put aside what's doubtful while you speak cautiously of the rest. [...] See much and put aside what seems perilous while you are cautious in carrying the rest into practice.¹²⁸

They also say:

To hear much and select what is good and follow it, to see much and remember it, is the second type of knowledge.¹²⁹

And they also say:

I am not one who was born with knowledge but, being fond of antiquity, I am quick to seek it.¹³⁰

These statements show that [Confucius] did not reject acquiring knowledge

¹²⁶ *Meng Zi*, 7A:4.

¹²⁷ *Lunyu*, 4:15, tr. Chan, *A Source Book*, p. 27.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 2:18, tr. Chan, *A Source Book*, p. 24.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 7:27, tr. Chan, *A Source Book*, pp. 32–33.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 7:19, tr. Chan, *A Source Book*, p. 32 and Lau, *The Analects*, p. 88 mod.

through continued studies. The scope of what one hears and what one sees is necessarily wide, and the important task is to attain enlightenment in the heart. When a matter becomes clear there remains nothing hidden or concealed about it, and this applies to one matter after another, so that at long last the mental faculty will reach [the stage of] sagely wisdom. How could someone's wisdom be exhausted on a matter which he has not studied? *The Book of Changes* says:

Investigate the principle of things with care and refinement until you enter into their spirit, for then their application can be extended.¹³¹

It also says:

Wisdom embraces the myriad things and [its] *dao* helps the whole world, and therefore there is no mistake.¹³²

Mencius says:

A gentleman advances in learning according to *dao* because he wants to grasp it himself. Having grasped it himself, he will be at ease in it. When he is at ease in it, he can draw deeply upon it. When he can draw deeply upon it, he finds its source wherever he turns.¹³³

All this describes what it means to understand the essence of *dao*. For the heart that understands the essence of *dao*, just as for sagely wisdom, there is nothing that is incomprehensible and cannot be penetrated. This [understanding] cannot be reached by means of acquiring knowledge through continued studies. If you only know traces [of *dao*], you will day after day seek to know more [traces], which just shows that this is not enough [to attain an understanding of the essence of *dao*]. *The Book of Changes* also says:

In the world the destination is the same though the different roads are many. The result is one though deliberations number a hundred. What is there in the world to think about or to deliberate about?¹³⁴

“The destination is the same” means that the destination is humanity in its

¹³¹ *Yijing*, “Xici”, B; tr. Chan, *A Source Book*, p. 268 mod.

¹³² *Ibid.*, A; tr. Chan, *A Source Book*, p. 265 mod.

¹³³ *Meng Zi*, 4B:14, tr. Lau, *Mencius*, p. 130 mod. Lau renders the first sentence thus: “A gentleman steepes himself in the Way because he wishes to find it in himself.” Most commentators have indeed taken the subject to be studied man himself rather than the external world. But such an interpretation here makes *dao* appear “as a thing ...embodied in the heart”, and so we should be safe in assuming that this was not the interpretation that Dai Zhen favoured.

¹³⁴ *Yijing*, “Xici”, B.

highest form and righteousness in its full realization. "The different roads are many" refers to the differences by means of which matters of fact are distinguished. "The result is one" means that the enlightenment of the mental faculty is fully realized to [the stage of] sagely wisdom. "Deliberations number a hundred" means to penetrate the laws of different facts. Mencius says:

Study extensively (*boxue*) and explain [what you have studied] thoroughly so that you can go back and discuss the essential (*yue*).¹³⁵

"Essential" means to grasp what is most appropriate. He also says:

To hold on to the essential while applying it extensively, this is a good *dao*. [...] What the gentleman holds on to is the cultivation of his self, and yet it brings peace to the world.¹³⁶

"Essential" refers to the cultivation of the self. When the Six Classics and the writings of Confucius and Mencius discuss essential action, this only pertains to the cultivation of the self; when they discuss essential knowledge, this only refers to extending the heart's enlightenment. They never arbitrarily refer to some "oneness", which they tell people to seek and get to know. If someone extends his heart's enlightenment, he can naturally evaluate matters of fact without making the slightest mistake. What need is there then to seek and get to know the oneness?

¹³⁵ *Meng Zi*, 4B:15.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 7B:32; tr. D.C. Lau, *Mencius* p. 201 mod.

3.5.3.

Question: The Analects say:

To control oneself and return to propriety is humanity.¹³⁷

Master Zhu explains this saying:

“[O]neself” means one’s selfish desires. Propriety refers to the regulations set by heavenly *li*.¹³⁸

He also says:

Complete virtue of the heart is nothing but heavenly *li* and can only be harmed by human desires.¹³⁹

This and his statment that “after man is born *li* descends into [and takes up abode in] the *qi* of the body”¹⁴⁰ complement each other. Lao, Zhuang, and Shakyamuni [advocate that you should be] free from desires but not that you should be free from selfishness; the *dao* of the sages and worthies is to be free from selfishness but not to be free from desires. The sages and worthies definitely never talked about “selfish desires”. But one cannot say that a sage like Yan Zi was unable to conquer selfish desires, so how could one say that he was harmed by selfish desires? Moreover, further down in this passage [Confucius] says, “to practise humanity depends on oneself”.¹⁴¹ How can one know that the word “oneself” in “control oneself” is not the same as that further down in the passage? With the exception of this paragraph in *The Analects* you definitely do not come across “selfish desires” as a designation of the self. Master Zhu also says:

To practise humanity depends on oneself and is not something that others can take part in.¹⁴²

How could there be room for these superfluous words as encouragement in connection with [Confucius’ words in praise of Yan Yuan as] someone who “listens to [my teaching] with unflagging attention”¹⁴³ Now would you please explain this paragraph?

¹³⁷ *Lunyu*, 12:1; cf. Chan, *A Source Book*, p. 38, note 1.

¹³⁸ *Lunyu jizhu*, 12:1.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁰ *Zhu Zi yulei*, *juan* 95.

¹⁴¹ *Lunyu*, 12:1.

¹⁴² *Lunyu jizhu*, 12:1.

¹⁴³ *Lunyu*, 9:19.

Answer: [In the phrase] “to control oneself and return to propriety is humanity” the word “oneself” is used in distinction to “the world”; “propriety” refers to the unchangeable and most appropriate laws [governing human conduct]. Therefore [Mencius] says:

When all movements and expressions are exactly proper according to the rules of propriety, that shows the highest degree of eminent virtue.¹⁴⁴

Whenever opinions are somewhat partial or virtue is not pure, this is the beginning of the separation of the self from the world. If you are able to abide by the unchangeable and most appropriate laws [governing human conduct], you will not become separated from the world. Therefore, [*The Analects*] say:

If a man can for one day control himself and return to propriety, the world will return to humanity.¹⁴⁵

But neither is the practice of humanity determined by the world; in fact, the practice of humanity is determined by the self and not by others, and therefore it says:

To practise humanity depends on oneself. Does it depend on others?¹⁴⁶

If you are not a sage you cannot easily talk about the impartiality of your opinions or the purity of your moral nature. When you reach the state that your opinions are impartial and your moral nature is pure, your movements will all be exactly proper according to the rules of propriety. Speaking about one person’s seeing, hearing, words, and movements – nothing will make these four err with regard to propriety, and all movements and expressions will be exactly proper according to the rules of propriety; they will only differ in terms of [acting] naturally and easily or with effort and with difficulty.¹⁴⁷ Without exception the sages urged people to seek the most appropriate [laws governing human conduct] and then practise these; and in seeking the most appropriate, [acquiring] knowledge was the primary task. To eradicate selfishness without seeking to eradicate obscurity, to emphasize action without first emphasizing knowledge – this is not the teaching of the sages. Mencius says:

¹⁴⁴ *Meng Zi*, 7B:33; tr. Chan, *A Source Book*, p. 83.

¹⁴⁵ *Lunyu*, 12:1.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁷ “Naturally and easily” and “with effort and difficulty” allude to *Zhongyong*, 20; Cf. above section 3.4.2. p. 277.

Holding on to the mean without [allowing for] flexible evaluation according to circumstances is like holding on to one extreme.¹⁴⁸

Flexible evaluation according to circumstances is a means to distinguish between what is light and what is heavy. This is to say that when matters of fact can be correctly analyzed by means of the heart's enlightenment, then this is flexible evaluation according to circumstances. When learning reaches this stage, there is "one thread binding it together" and there is no longer any partiality of opinions.

¹⁴⁸ *Meng Zi*, 7A:26.

3.5.4.

Question: Mencius denounced Yang [Zhu] and Mo [Zi], Han Tuizhi denounced Lao and Shakyamuni. Now you use so many words to denounce the Confucian writings since the Song. Why is this?

Answer: Since these words have penetrated deeply into men's hearts, they may cause much harm although no one realizes this. And if no one realizes it, I do not know the end of the harm that they may cause people. Yang and Mo were in Mencius' time considered as sages. As for Lao and Shakyamuni, ordinary people consider [even] sages and worthies not to have reached their level. As far as their conduct is concerned, all of them practised what they knew and their brilliance equalled "the practising gentleman" [whose level Confucius said he had not attained].¹⁴⁹ Therefore, the whole world respected and trusted them. That Mencius and Han [Yu] could not stop arguing with them was because their words had penetrated deeply into men's hearts and caused much harm to men. How could this be compared to ordinary mistakes with regard to a notion or a thing? In answer to Gongsun Chou's question about "understanding words", Mencius said:

From biased words I can understand, wherein the speaker is obscured; from immoderate words, wherein he is ensnared; from heretical words, wherein he has strayed from the right path; from evasive words, wherein he is at his wits' end. What arises in the heart will cause harm to the government, and what shows itself in government will cause harm to [human] affairs. Were a sage to rise again, he would surely agree with what I have said.¹⁵⁰

In answer to Gongdu Zi's question [why] "outsiders all say that you, Master, is fond of arguing", Mencius said:

[I wish to safeguard the way of the former sages against the onslaught of Yang and Mo and to banish excessive views.] Then advocates of heresies will not be able to rise. For what arises in the heart will be harmful to the government, and what shows itself in government will be harmful to [human] affairs. Were a sage to rise again, he would surely agree with what I have said.¹⁵¹

That Mencius twice says "were a sage to rise again" is because he clearly saw that when these biased and heretical words penetrated deeply into men's hearts, they necessarily caused harm to [human] affairs and to the government and that, although harmed by them, no one in the whole world could perceive this. If it had not been like this, then why would Mencius have despised people

¹⁴⁹ *Lunyu*, 7:33.

¹⁵⁰ *Meng Zi*, 2A:2; tr. Lau, *Mencius*, p. 78 mod.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 35:9; tr. Lau, *Mencius*, pp. 114–115 mod.

like Yang, Mo, and Gao, who all practised what they knew and whose brilliance indeed equalled that of the practising gentleman, so that people in the world respected and trusted them? Yang Zhu cried over all by-roads, feeling sad that in seeking [knowledge] of the external world one will come to one by-pass after another.¹⁵² Mo Di sighed over the dying of silk, feeling sad that men are so dyed that they lose their original nature.¹⁵³

The learning of Lao and Shakyamuni valued holding on to the one and having no desires, and Confucians since the Song have explained this in terms of *li*. When they distinguish between *li* and desires, this is just like holding on to one extreme without [allowing for] flexible evaluation according to circumstances. They designate any sensation of hunger, cold, worry, and resentment, any craving for drink and food or sex, or any ordinary feelings and feelings about minor matters of everyday life as “human desires”. All their lives they therefore see desires as difficult to handle. When they talk about “preserving *li*”, the notion of *li* is empty and, in the final analysis, nothing but a wish to eradicate feelings and desires. How could they be eradicated? They speak about “one thing and not getting away from it”,¹⁵⁴ and this is the same as Lao Zi’s “hold on to the one” and “have no desires”. Therefore, Master Zhou takes [concentrating on] one thing as the essential way of learning from the sages, and explains this in saying:

[To concentrate on] one thing means to have no desires.¹⁵⁵

There is necessarily no one in the world who can abandon the *dao* of life and nourishment and still exist. Behind any fact or action there is a desire. If there is no desire there is no action, only when there is desire can there be action. Action that conforms to what is most appropriate and unchangeable is what is meant by *li*. But where can there be any *li* if there is no desire and no action? Lao, Zhuang, and Shakyamuni place the main emphasis on having no desires and on taking no action, and thus do not speak about *li*. The task that the sages set themselves was to make their desires and actions accord with *li*. Therefore, the gentleman possesses no selfishness and does not place any value on having no desires. The gentleman makes his desires issue from correctness and not from perverseness, and so he does not have to be free from any sensation of hunger, cold, worry, and resentment, from any craving for drink and food or sex, or from any ordinary feelings and feelings about minor matters of

¹⁵² Cf. *Xun Zi*, “Wang ba” and *Lie Zi*, “Shuofu”.

¹⁵³ Cf. *Mo Zi*, “Suoran”.

¹⁵⁴ *Henan Cheng shi yishu*, juan 15; tr. Chan, *A Source Book*, p. 552.

¹⁵⁵ Zhou Dunyi, *Tong Shu*, 15:1; tr. Chan, *A Source Book*, p. 473 mod.

everyday life. But defaming utterances and insulting words have still made it possible to find fault with the gentleman. So disastrous is this separation of *li* and desires that it makes the gentleman's conduct [appear] imperfect.

Only he who has freed himself from desires is considered a gentleman while small people being small people will continue their corrupt and evil conduct. Those who only by holding on to this consider themselves gentlemen say: "What does not issue from *li* issues from desires, and what does not issue from desires issues from *li*". They speak about *li* as if it were a thing received from heaven and embodied in the heart. As a result there is no "gentleman" who does not consider his opinions as *li*. And since they are confident that they do not proceed from desires, they say: "There is no [cause for] shame in my heart." Did people in ancient times really have this in mind when they spoke about having no [cause for] shame? Someone who does not understand that his opinions are often partial and cannot be called *li* will necessarily hold on to them stubbornly. If someone rejects his opinions as false, he will say that this person has himself broken with *li*. So disastrous is this separation of *li* and desire that it has become a tool of ruthless killing.

When Yao and Shun worried about distress and want within the four seas,¹⁵⁶ and King Wen treated the people as if they had been hurt,¹⁵⁷ they all cared for the human desires of the people. They only guided them suitably according to circumstances and made them conform to goodness. Now since they sharply separate *li* and desires as two [entities], [the Song Confucians] when governing their own lives consider as *li* what does not issue from own desires; and also when governing others they necessarily consider as *li* what does not issue from desires. Any sensation among people of hunger, cold, worry or resentment, any craving for drink and food or sex, or any ordinary feelings and feelings about minor matters of everyday life they regard as utterly insignificant human desires. Regarding [desires] as insignificant they say: "I emphasize heavenly *li* and universal righteousness." These words may be beautiful but, when used to govern other people, they bring disaster. When people below deceive people above, [the Song Confucians] call this "lack of human goodness". Why do they not consider the fact that the sages sympathized with the feelings of the people and satisfied their desires without talking about heavenly *li* and universal righteousness, and then it was easy for people to avoid the *dao* of evil and sin. With regard to people who "go astray and get into excesses, stopping at nothing and falling into crime",¹⁵⁸ Mencius says:

¹⁵⁶ *Lunyu*, 20:1.

¹⁵⁷ Cf. *Meng Zi*, 4B:20.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 1A:7, and 3A:3; tr. Lau, *Mencius*, pp. 58 and 97 mod.

“[to pursue and punish them] is to set a trap for the people”¹⁵⁹

And he also says:

Simply to survive takes more energy than the people have. What time can they spare for learning about propriety and righteousness?¹⁶⁰

When people in ancient times talked about *li*, they sought it in man's feelings and desires; when these were made flawless, they considered them as *li*. When people nowadays speak about *li*, they seek it apart from feelings and desires; when people are made to endure [hardships] without any grievances, they consider this to be in accord with *li*. This separation of *li* and desires serves precisely to turn all people in the world into deceivers and phonies. How could one fully describe how disastrous [this separation] is? What they call desire is when emperors and kings do their utmost for the people; what they call *li* is not what the ancient sages and worthies called *li*. Their words are mixed with the words of Lao and Shakyamuni, and that is why they have necessarily been so harmful in practice!

But ever since the Song, Confucians have done their utmost to refute Lao and Shakyamuni. Not realizing that they themselves have been influenced by the ideas [of Lao and Shakyamuni], they have projected each one of these on to the Classics and labelled them as the words of the Six Classics and of Confucius and Mencius. This easily deludes people and is difficult to refute, and therefore this situation has already prevailed for several hundred years. Now people know in their hearts what the Song Confucians said but no longer realize that this is different from the words of the Six Classics and of Confucius and Mencius. People in general consider them as Confucians who practise what they preach, and so trust them without reservations. [In their time] Yang, Mo, Lao, and Shakyamuni [were also considered to] practise what they preached, to promote goodness and to censure evil, to rescue people's hearts, and to help in governing and educating the people. They were respected and trusted by people in the world, and therefore emperors and kings also respected and trusted them. When Mencius and Master Han [Yu] had refuted them and [people] heard about the doctrines of Mencius and Master Han, they began to realize that [Yang, Mo, Lao, and Shakyamuni] differed from the

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.* The quoted words are preceded by the following: “Only a gentleman can have a constant heart in spite of a lack of constant means of support. The people, on the other hand, will not have constant hearts if they are without constant means. Lacking constant hearts, they will go astray...” (*Meng Zi*, 1A:7; tr. Lau, *Mencius*, p. 58 mod.). “Those with constant means of support will have constant hearts, while those without constant means of support will not have constant hearts. Lacking constant hearts, they will go astray...” (*Meng Zi*, 3A:3, tr. Lau, *Mencius*, p. 97 mod.). Meng Zi's point here is, in other words, that satisfaction of man's material needs, of his human desires, is a prerequisite of morality: “Erst kommt das Fressen und dann die Moral.”

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 1A:7; tr. Lau, *Mencius*, p. 59 mod.

sages, but they did not actually understand how they differed. When it comes to Confucian writings since the Song, everyone says: "This is the same as the sages; whoever disputes [their writings] wants to establish new and heterodox doctrines." This is like a child who loses his parents and is then adopted by other people as their son. When he has grown up he cannot know that these other people are not his [real] parents. Even if someone tells him who his real parents are, he is bound to get angry and deny this as untrue. Therefore, one can say "difficult to refute". Alas, only if [the Song Confucians and their followers] had not caused any harm to [human] affairs and the government, thereby bringing disasters to the people, would I respect them – and what would there then be to dislike? Dislike represents concern for the human heart.

Abbreviations

BMFEA *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities*

DZJ *Dazangjing*

ed. editor, edited by

mod. modified

tr. translator, translated by

SBBY *Sibu beiyao*

SBCK *Sibu congkan*

SSJZS *Shisan jing zhushu*

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Glossary

1. Names

Anzhenghui	安正辉	He Yan	何晏
Cang Jie	仓颉	He Pingshu	何平叔
Chen Anqing	陈安卿	Kong Zi	孔子
Cheng Hao	程颢	Lao Dan	老聃
Cheng Mingdao	程明道	Lao Zi	老子
Cheng Bozi	程伯子	Li Shizhen	李时珍
Cheng Yi	程颐	Li Tong	李侗
Cheng Shuzi	程叔子	Li Yuanzhong	李愿中
Dahui Song Gao	大慧宋果	Liao Deming	廖德明
Dai Zhen	戴震	Lin Fang	林放
Dai Dongyuan	戴东原	Lu Kanru	陆侃如
Duan Yucai	段玉裁	Lu Xiangshan	陆象山
Duanmu Ci	端木赐	Lu Zijing	陆子静
Fan Zhongyan	范仲淹	Lu Yuanjing	陆原静
Fan Wenzheng	范文正	Lü Dalin	吕大临
Gao Zi	告子	Lü Yushu	吕与叔
Gongdu Zi	公都子	Lü Ziyue	吕子约
Gongsun Chou	公孙丑	Ma Xulun	马叙伦
Gu Jiegang	顾颉刚	Mao Huaixin	冒怀辛
Guo Pu	郭璞	Meng Zi	孟子
Han Fei Zi	韩非子	Mo Di	墨翟
Han Yu	韩愈	Mo Zi	墨子
Han Tuizhi	韩退之	Mou Shijin	牟世金

Pan Zishan	潘子善	Yao	尧
Qian Mu	钱穆	Yasuda Jiro	安天二郎
Qiu	秋	Yu	禹
Ruan Yuan	阮元	Zeng Zi	曾子
Ruiyan	瑞岩	Zhang Liwen	张立文
Shao Yong	邵雍	Zhang Zai	张载
Shao Zi	邵子	Zhang Hengqu	张横渠
Shen Buhai	申不害	Zheng Xuan	郑玄
Shun	顺	Zheng Kangcheng	郑康成
Sun Xingyan	孙星衍	Zhou Dunyi	周敦颐
Tang	汤	Zhou Maoshu	周茂叔
Tang Zhijun	汤志钧	Zhou Zi	周子
Wang Mao	王茂	Zhou Gong	周公
Wang Yangming	王阳明	Zhu Xi	朱熹
Wang Wencheng	王文成	Zhu Zi	朱子
Wen Yiduo	闻一多	Zhuang Zhou	庄周
Wu	武	Zhuang Zi	庄子
Xie	契	Zi Chan	子产
Xie Liangzuo	谢良佐	Zi Gong	子贡
Xu Shen	许慎	Zi Mo	子莫
Xu Shuzhong	许叔重	Zi Xia	子夏
Xun Zi	荀子		
Yan Yuan	颜渊		
Yan Zi	颜子		
Yang Bojun	杨伯君		
Yang Xiong	扬雄		
Yang Zhu	杨朱		

3. Titles of Books, Articles, and Chapters

Beixi xuean	北溪学案
Bencao gangmu	本草纲目
Chengming	诚明
Chuanxi lu	传习录
Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhengyi	春秋左传正义
Da Dai Liji	大戴礼记
Da Hengqu Zhang Zihou xiansheng shu	答横渠张子厚先生书
Da Huang Dafu	答黄大夫
Da Lü Ziyue	答吕子约
Da Pan Zishan	答潘子善
Da Wang Shangshu shu	答汪尚书书
Dahui pujue chanshi yulu	大慧普觉禅师语录
Daxue	大学
Daxue zhangju	大学章句
Dazangjing	大藏经
Dai Dongyuan xiansheng nianpu	戴东原先生年谱
Dai Zhen de ren zhi xueshuo	戴震的仁智学说
Dai Zhen ji	戴震集
Dai Zhen wenji	戴震文集
Dai Zhen xueshu sixiang lungao	戴震学术思想论稿
Dai Zhen zhexue zhuzuo xuanzhu	戴震哲学著作选注
Daode jing	道德经
Daozang jinghua lu	道藏精华录
Er Cheng ji	二程集

hai
hun
ji
jili
jian
jing
jing
jing
juan
jue
jujiu you bie
ke
kun
li
ling
lü
ming
ming li yi
mo bu you ci
ou
po
qi
qian
qing
quan
ren
san da de

害
魂
奇
肌理
简
静
精
经
卷
觉
踰鳩有別
克
坤
理
灵
续
命
明理义
莫不由此
偶
魄
气
乾
情
权
仁
三大德

shen
shenming
shi
shiqing
shu
suo shi zhe zhi ren yong ye,
shi zhi zhe ren ye, yi ye, li ye
ta
taiji
tian
tiandao
tiaoli
wei zhi
wenli
wenlü
wenzhang
wu
xian
xiang
xiaocheng
xie
xin
xin de xiangtong zhi chu
xin zhi suo tong ran zhe, he ye?
Wei li ye, yi ye
xing
xingming zhuzhi

神
神明
事
事情
恕
所实者智仁勇也
实之者仁也义也礼也
獼
太极
天
天道
条理
谓之
文理
文缕
文章
物
鲜
象
小成
絜
心
心的相同之处
心之所同然者何也
谓理也义也
行
性命主旨

xingqing

yang

ㄚˊyi

ㄅㄚˊyi

ㄘㄚˊyi

ㄉㄚˊyi

yi ji ji hu xingqing,

ci yi jiang yu wenli

yin

you tian bu you ren

yu min tong le

yu min xie le

yue

ㄚˊze

ㄅㄚˊze

zebei

zhan

zhanran

ㄚˊzhi

ㄅㄚˊzhi

ㄘㄚˊzhi

zhijue

zhi wei

ㄚˊzhong

ㄅㄚˊzhong

ziran

性情

阳

仪

蚁

易

义

义既极乎性情，

辞亦匠于文理

阴

由天不由人

与民同乐

与民偕乐

约

则

责

责备

湛

湛然

知

智

质

知觉

之谓

钟

忠

自然

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Fangyan
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Guanwu pian
Han Changli quanji
Henan Cheng shi yishu
Hongfan
Huangji jingshi
Jin'gang jing
Jingde Chuandeng lu
Jingfudian fu
Jingji zuangu
Kaogong ji
Lao Zi
Lao Zi jiaogu
Liji
Liqi
Liyun
Lie Zi
Liuzu tan jing
Lunyu
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Zhouyi zhengyi
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Zhu Xi sixiang yanjiu
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Zhu Zi quanshu
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